SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

General Synod 2026

Agenda and Papers

With thanks to Ecclesiastical for supporting the Synod Reception

Scottish Episcopal Church

GENERAL SYNOD 2026

Agenda and Papers

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- Baptism of Infants (1968) listed as item 3 in the Schedule

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General Synod Agenda and Programme
11 – 13 June 2026

Stirling Court Hotel, Stirling University, Stirling

THURSDAY 11 JUNE

09:30 – 10:00 Freshers' Meeting will be held in the Silver Glen Room (new members)

10:30 – 11:30 Opening Eucharist, Al Ahli Hospital Offering, Constitution of General Synod in the Wallace Monument Room

11:30 – 12:00 Tea & Coffee in the Silver Glen Room

Session One: The Most Rev the Primus in the Chair – in the Blair Atholl Room*

12:00 – 12:30 **Primus: Welcome to delegates and guests**

During this session Synod members will be invited to introduce themselves to each other in their table groups

Orientation and Housekeeping

Training session on how to vote

Preliminary Business (Page 10)

Appointment of Tellers

Motion 1: That James Lloyd, Miriam Weibye and Mark Kisby be appointed as tellers for the meeting.

Appointment of Prolocutors

Motion 2: That the Very Rev Graham Taylor be appointed as Clerical Prolocutor for the meeting.

Motion 3: That the Very Rev Sarah Murray be appointed as Clerical Vice-Prolocutor for the meeting.

Motion 4: That Canon Alistair Dinnie be appointed as Lay Prolocutor for the meeting.

Motion 5: That Ms Marion Mackay be appointed as Lay Vice-Prolocutor for the meeting.

Permission to speak

Motion 6: That Katie Harrison, Heather Ford, members of the Provincial Youth Committee along with the leaders of YEEK, invited representatives from other churches and faiths and provincial staff members be given permission to speak to Synod.

Minutes of General Synods 2025 (Page 11 and page 38)

Motion 7: That this Synod approve the minutes of the meeting of the General Synod held on 5-7 June 2025

Motion 8: That this Synod approve the minutes of the meeting of the General Synod held on 9 September 2025

Session Two: The Rt Rev Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane in the Chair

12:30 – 13:30 Joint Session: College of Bishops & Standing Committee – Presentation of the Provincial Strategy with table group discussions (page 43)

13:30 – 14:15 Lunch provided in the Silver Glen Room

Session Three: The Rt Rev Bishop of Argyll and The Isles in the Chair

14:15 – 15:30 **Faith and Order Board:** Draft Canon 54 Presentation

Conduct/Discipline Overview (page 46)
Canon 54 Discussion Document (page 47) and Draft Canon 54 (page 50)

15:30 – 15:50 Coffee & Tea in the Silver Glen Room

15:50 – 16:30 Draft Canon 54 - Feedback from table groups

Session Four: The Rt Rev Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway in the Chair

16:30 – 16:40 Heather Ford, Church Support Manager, Ecclesiastical

16:40 - 17:15 **Mission Board:** Provincial Youth Committee

17:15 – 17:30 Evening Prayer (remain in the Blair Atholl Room)

19:00 Reception in the Conservatory, supported by Ecclesiastical, followed by dinner in the restaurant at 19:30

FRIDAY 12 JUNE

09:00 – 09:20 Morning Prayer in the Wallace Monument Room

Session Five: The Rt Rev Bishop of Brechin

09:30 – 10:40 **Administration Board:** Presentation and table discussions

Complaints Procedure (page 76)
Draft Code of Conduct Policy (page 79)

10:40 – 11:00 Tea & Coffee in the Silver Glen Room

11:00 – 11:30 Policies feedback from table groups

Session Six: The Rt Rev Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney in the Chair

11:30 – 12:10 **Faith and Order Board:** Liturgy Committee

Second Reading of Blessing of a Marriage

The text of the Liturgy is available online by clicking: HERE
Opinions from Dioceses (page 85)

Motion 9: That the proposal that Blessing of a Marriage (2026 be added to the Schedule to Canon 22 be read for the second time.

Amendments to be proposed to first reading text:

Amendment 1

To add at the end of the above motion for second reading:

"subject to the following alteration:

- That the word 'nevertheless' be removed from the second sentence of the Notes for Guidance (p1)

First Reading of Liturgy in Times of Lament

The text of the Eucharistic material is available online by clicking: HERE

The text of the Liturgy of the Word is available online by clicking: HERE

Motion 10: That the proposal that the Scottish Liturgy 1982: Additions For Times of Lament (2027) be added to the Schedule to Canon 22 be read for the first time.

Motion 11: That the proposal that): A Service of the Word: Additions For Times of Lament (2027) be added to the Schedule to Canon 22 be read for the first time.

Removal of out-of-date liturgies from the Schedule to Canon 22

The text of the Baptism of Infants 1967 is available online by clicking: HERE

The text of the Burial of the Dead 1969 is available online by clicking: HERE

Motion 12: That the proposal that the following liturgies be deleted from the Schedule to Canon 22 with effect from the Sunday next before Advent in 2026 be read for the first time:

- Baptism of Infants (1968) listed as item 3 in the Schedule.
- Burial of the Dead (1969) listed as item 4 in the Schedule.

Introduction of Feast of God the Creator (page 87)

Motion 13: That this Synod:

a) affirms its support for the introduction of Feast of God the Creator in the SEC Calendar

b) agrees its date as the First Sunday in September

c) requests that the Faith and Order Board instruct the Liturgy Committee to include the Feast of God the Creator in its preparation of liturgies for the proposed Season of Creation.

Link to *A Precious Gift for the Third Millenium - Proposal for National Churches:* Feast of Creation.

12:10 – 12:30 **Mission Board:** Reflections on mission by the Rt Rev Bishop of Glasgow

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch (Synod members to purchase lunch on campus)

Session Seven: The Most Rev the Primus in the Chair

14:00 – 14:45 **Faith and Order Board:** Draft Canon 69 Presentation

Discussion paper (page 91)
Draft Canon 69 (page 92)

14:45 – 14:55 **Administration Board:** Proposed change to Stipend (page 93)

Motion 14: that the Scottish Episcopal Church's Standard Stipend will increase annually by the greater of:

1. CPI (the July figure in the preceding year) and
2. the amount required to maintain parity with the Church of England's National Stipend Benchmark

14:55 - 15:10 **Standing Committee:** Financial Statements, Budget and Quota Overview

Financial Statements (page 95)

Motion 15: That this Synod accept the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church for the financial year ended 31 December 2025.

15:10 – 15:50 **Legacy of Slavery Working Group**

15:50 – 16:10 Tea and Coffee in the Silver Glen room

Session Eight: Rt Rev Bishop of Edinburgh in the Chair

16:10 – 16:30 **Standing Committee:** Provincial Environment Group (Bishop Ian Paton, Convener)

16:30 – 16:50 **Institute Council:** Scottish Episcopal Institute
(Rev Dr Anna-Claar Thomasson-Rosingh, Acting Principal)

16:50 – 17:00 **Standing Committee:** Provincial Safeguarding Committee
(Ms Christine Riddoch, Head of Safeguarding)

17:00 – 17:15 Evening Prayer (remain in the Blair Atholl Room)

18:30 Dinner in the restaurant

20:00 Pub Quiz in the Students' Union

SATURDAY 13 JUNE

09:00 – 09:20 Morning Prayer in the Wallace Monument Room

Session Nine: The Most Rev the Primus in the Chair

09:30 – 11:10 **Faith and Order Board:** Inter-Church Relations Committee

Presentation from Rt Rev Anthony Poggo, Anglican Communion

Response to the Nairobi-Cairo Proposals

Link to the Anglican Communion website: Nairobi-Cairo proposals,

Response Papers from Faith and Order Board (page 101)

Motion 16: That this Synod:

a) strongly affirms its commitment to and membership of the Anglican Communion. It recognises that, in accordance with Canon 15.1.a., the churches of the Anglican Communion constitute the primary group of churches with which the SEC is in communion.

b) recognises and affirms the need to revise the definition of the Anglican Communion set out in 1930, to acknowledge the changes in the Communion and the need for the leadership of the Communion better to reflect the breadth of the Communion.

c) While supporting these proposals in principle, requests its delegates to ACC 19 to ask for amendments to the proposals set out in the Nairobi Cairo Proposals and in the Supplement to those proposals, in accordance with the SEC responses to those proposals prepared by the Inter-Church Relations Committee at the request of the Faith and Order Board and submitted to IASCUFO in December 2025 and to the Anglican Communion Office in April 2026.

Amendment to Schedule to Canon 15

Motion 17: That The Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Faroe Islands be added to Schedule One to Canon 15

Motion 18: That the name of The Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad be changed to The Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Worldwide in Schedule One to Canon 15

Working in Partnership (page 116)

11:10 – 11:25 **Digest of Resolutions – Adoption of Gender Inclusive Language**

Background paper (page 124)

Motion 19: That this Synod approves the revision of the Digest of Resolutions to adopt gender-inclusive language throughout the text, such revisions not altering the meaning or effect of any provision.

This shall include:

- replacing gender-specific language (such as “he”, “him”, or “his”) with gender-neutral equivalents; and
- replacing binary constructions (such as “he/she” or “his/her”) with gender-inclusive alternatives where appropriate.

A copy of the amended version of the Digest of Resolutions is available online by clicking: HERE

11:25 – 11:40 Standing Committee: Budget and Quota Overview (Page 95)

Motion 20: That this Synod, having examined the proposed budgets for the General Synod for the year 2027, agree to a quota figure of £820,000 (a £35,000 increase on the 2026 figure) for that year.

11:40 Elections (Page 125)

Motion 21: That the Rt Rev Dr John Armes be appointed as a Trustee of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

12:00 Closing act of worship and confirmation of Acts of Synod

*All of the business will take place in the Blair Atholl Room unless otherwise specified.

PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

1. Welcome to Delegates from Other Churches and Faiths

Rev Ross Blackman: Church of Scotland
Major David Cavanagh: Salvation Army
Most Rev Leo Cushley, Archbishop of St Andrews & Edinburgh: Roman Catholic Church
Ms Frances Hume: Interfaith Scotland
Rev Dr Jane McArthur: United Free Church of Scotland
Derek McLean: Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Rev Linsey Sanderson: United Reformed Church
Rev Mark Slaney: The Methodist Church in Scotland
Baptist Union of Scotland: unable to send a delegate

Guests from outwith Scotland
Very Rev Susan Green, Church of Ireland
Rt Rev Anthony Poggo, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion

2. Tellers and Prolocutors

The Standing Committee recommends the following appointments:

Tellers:

James Lloyd, Miriam Weibye, Mark Kisby (AV Department)

Prolocutors:

Clerical Prolocutor:	Very Rev Graham Taylor
Clerical Vice-Prolocutor:	Very Rev Sarah Murray
Lay Prolocutor:	Canon Alistair Dinnie
Lay Vice-Prolocutor:	Ms Marion Mackay

3. Assessor

The Primus has appointed Gavin McEwan as Assessor

4. Permission to Speak

5. Minutes of General Synod Meetings June and September 2025

6. Any Matters Arising from Minutes

7. Elections/Appointments

Trustee of the Scottish Episcopal Church

8. Roll Call

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH HELD AT ST PAUL'S AND ST GEORGE'S CHURCH, EDINBURGH ON 5-7 JUNE 2025

Freshers' Meeting

A meeting was held prior to the start of Synod to introduce new members to the programme and to the Synod's business procedures.

Opening Eucharist

The Synod was constituted at a celebration of the Eucharist at St Paul's & St George's Church, Edinburgh at 10.30am on Thursday 5 June 2025.

The Most Rev Mark Strange, Primus, delivered his charge to the Synod during the Eucharist, reporting that he had had the privilege of spending time in India the previous summer. He had visited and spent time at the former Scottish Episcopal Church's mission church of St Andrew's, Chandrapur. He had arrived with a degree of apprehension. The shadow of Colonialism, the taking of our style of church to other lands, questions about the nature of mission in overseas places.

However, he had discovered a large group of people who had been waiting to rekindle a very important relationship. One elderly man approached him with tears in his eyes to thank him. The Primus was bemused as he had only preached, but the man told him that his mother had been one of the first patients at the hospital the SEC established and the nurses from Scotland had saved her life and safely delivered him. He was 89 and had waited a long time to say thank you to his Primus. The Primus was stunned and emotional, to him he was still part of our church whatever we believed our relationship was.

It should be remembered that relationships created by prayer, ministry and love could survive the problems around us if we but let them.

Much of the Synod agenda this year would be looking at the relationships and the healing of broken relationships around us. Synod members would hear from the Very Rev Sally Foster-Fulton as they considered the breakdown of relationships in Sudan, the unimaginable suffering caused and the real struggle to rebuild.

Everyone was aware of the continuing conflict in Ukraine and the effects of that conflict on the wellbeing of the countries that border Russia. A visit to Rega in Latvia, showed how important their relationship with the rest of Europe was and how the Porvoo Links were vital for them.

The previous month the Primus said he had been able to spend some time talking to Archbishop Hosam of Jerusalem, a man who walked a very difficult path, who sought at all times to sustain the many relationships he had across Israel-Palestine while at the same time seeking to comfort his people and to condemn the violence against them. He asked us to continue praying and when possible to support the institutions of the Diocese.

Synod this year would look at our ecumenical relationships. The proposed St Ninians Declaration with the Catholic Church gave us an opportunity to look at what we shared, as well as what still divided us, never allowing those divisions to stop us talking and sharing when we could.

There would be debates and motions on matters which divided opinion across our society, debates we needed to hear and to speak to, but as the Church we needed to model a style of debate that allowed us to speak with the love of Christ foremost in our hearts.

The SEC had an opportunity to use its resources to free the Church from continual anxiety about survival. The Provincial Strategy could help build even stronger relationships between dioceses and Province as ways were found of extending and growing our ministry across Scotland.

Relationships with each other needed to be worked on; the purpose of Synod was to get business done, but it was also the opportunity to spend time together, discovering new friendships and rekindling old ones.

More could be achieved if we could be helped to stop being fearful of the future and become more confident in the present, to become people who listen and learn from each other.

The disciples who watched Jesus withdraw from them at the Ascension didn't sit down to discuss the pain they felt at his going; they returned to Jerusalem rejoicing. Trusting and praying each day that the gift they had been promised would and should make a difference to those they lived amongst. Things had been horrible in Jerusalem but now they had a mission to live out. They used the gift of the Spirit there to grow the Church, whatever the personal outcome for them, trusting in the promise of a heavenly home with Jesus. We, said the Primus, were called to do the same, to live our faith now, to use the gifts we had received, now.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Primus then invited the Very Rev Sally Foster Fulton to address Synod regarding Christian Aid's Sudan Crisis Appeal which was the beneficiary of the Synod Offering. The amount collected, including Gift Aid, was £1,442.20.

SESSION 1: THE MOST REV THE PRIMUS IN THE CHAIR

1.1 Preliminary Business

1.1.1 Welcome

The Primus welcomed all members of Synod including the following delegates representing other churches and faiths:

Rev Ross Blackman: Church of Scotland
Rev Fiona Bennett: United Reformed Church
Major David Cavanagh: Salvation Army
Rev Steven Cooper: The Methodist Church in Scotland
Most Rev Leo Cushley, Archbishop of St Andrews & Edinburgh: Roman Catholic Church
Derek McLean: Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Rev Andrew McMillan: United Free Church of Scotland
The Venerable Dr Hayley Matthews, Archdeacon of Wrexham, Church in Wales

A test vote was then undertaken using the voting devices provided.

1.1.2 Preliminary Announcements

The Rt Rev John Armes, Bishop of Edinburgh, then addressed Synod members as follows:

> "One of my favourite children's programmes of yesteryear was The Clangers – a family of friendly creatures living on a planet far from earth. I don't suppose that St Paul had cuddly aliens in mind when he told us that we can speak with the most eloquent, beautiful and persuasive words, but without love those words sound like 'a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal' – discordant, tone deaf.
>
> A Synod is full of words, of course, and you may or may not know that this Synod, more than most, has been assailed by words before we even gathered this morning. Perhaps this is inevitable, this being the first General Synod since a significant Canon 54 process relating to Aberdeen and Orkney reached its conclusion. And when people are hurting and angry, or when they're filled with crusading zeal, perhaps they don't consider fully the implications of their words or the impact they may have on those who receive them.
>
> The trouble is, relentless accusations aimed at Synod staff, the Provincial Standing Committee and individual members of the College of Bishops, can be experienced by those recipients as every bit as harassing and bullying as the behaviours they seek to expose, whilst

not being accountable to the same canonical processes as those properly and legally concluded back in October.

One of the important things we learn as we grow up is that it is possible to be right and wrong at the same time. The requirement to be faithful, for example, may not always align with the requirement to be loving, or a determination to stick firmly to our moral scruples may not always allow space for us to build genuine peace and friendship. Psalm 85 says as much, as it looks for a time when 'Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other.' After all, as St Paul recognizes, in this life we know only in part, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, we do not yet know anything fully.

An outside observer, then, shouldn't be shocked to find us disagreeing; there's no scandal in disagreement, no undesirable risk to our reputation as a church that we have robust debate and respectful challenge. Far more dangerous would be the perception that our disagreements are being used as an excuse to act against one another without love or kindness and as an opportunity cause hurt and anxiety. To be a church that speaks without love would be the worst possible reputation to have, the worst possible legacy to leave, for only three things abide, faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love.

In other words, and I say this to myself as well as to everyone here, whether in Synod for the next few days or in the wider life of the church, please, don't be a clanger."

Synod Voting Procedures

Ms Bridget Campbell (Convener of Standing Committee) then proposed, and Mrs Jan Whiteside (Standing Committee member) seconded, the amendment by Standing Committee to Rule 12(d) of the Rules of Order:

"That this Synod agree to the amendment to Rule 12 (d) of the Rules of Order to allow voting at Synod to be undertaken electronically rather than on a show of hands with the following wording:

When the question is put to the vote, tellers shall be named from the Chair and shall give in their report of each division taken. The vote shall normally be taken by electronic means and the result will be declared by the Chair. In the absence of electronic means, Synod will decide on how it will conduct the vote."

The motion was put to the vote and passed: 107 in favour, 6 against, no abstentions.

1.1.3 Appointment of Tellers

Ms Campbell then proposed, and Mrs Whiteside seconded, the following motion:

"That James Lloyd, Miriam Weibye and Mark Kisby be appointed as tellers for the meeting."

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 113 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

1.1.4 Appointment of Prolocutors

The Very Rev Sarah Murray (Convener of Mission Board) proposed, and the Rev Diana Hall seconded, the following motion:

"That the Very Rev John Conway be appointed as Clerical Prolocutor for the meeting."

The motion was put to the vote in the House of Clergy and passed as follows: 57 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

Provost Murray then proposed, and Ms Hall seconded, the following motion:

"That the Very Rev Roxanne Campbell be appointed as Clerical Vice Prolocutor for the meeting."

The motion was put to the vote in the House of Clergy and passed as follows: 55 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

Ms Campbell proposed, and Mrs Whiteside seconded, the following motion:

"That Dr Nicola Mills be appointed as Lay Prolocutor for the meeting."

The motion was put to the vote in the House of Laity and passed as follows: 48 in favour, none against.

Ms Campbell then proposed, and Mrs Whiteside seconded, the following motion:

"That Ms Jenny Whelan be appointed as Lay Vice-Prolocutor for the meeting."

The motion was put to the vote in the House of Laity and passed as follows: 45 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

1.1.5 Permission to Speak

Bishop Armes (Bishop of Edinburgh) proposed, and Ms Campbell seconded, the following motion:

"That the Rev Nick Bowry, members of the Provincial Youth Committee along with the leaders of YEEK, invited representatives from other churches and faiths and provincial staff members be given permission to speak to Synod."

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 111 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

1.1.6 Minutes of General Synod 2024

The Rev Peter Mead (Brechin) noted that on page 61 of the minutes, the amended Rule 10 Motion included clause 4 which had been deleted by the first amendment.

Subject to the amendment above being made, Ms Campbell then proposed, and the Rt Rev Andrew Swift (Bishop of Brechin) seconded, the following motion:

"That this Synod approve the minutes of the meeting of the General Synod held on 13-15 June 2024."

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 100 in favour, 1 against, no abstentions.

1.1.7 Roll Call

The roll call of Synod members was taken by the completion of a registration sheet as Synod members had arrived at the meeting of Synod. A total of 121 members attended.

SESSION 2: THE VERY REV MARGARET CAMPBELL IN THE CHAIR

2.1 Administration Board: Investment Committee

Mr Mark Harris (Convener of the Investment Committee) gave a presentation and reported the following:

- The UTP was by nature long-term and provided consistency and stability when managed properly and this would be a recurring theme.

- Currently the UTP unit price was £30.18, pretty close to the all-time high. Whilst there was noise in the media about market fluctuations, this did not relate to the UTP.
- The trend was continuing long term growth with some ups and downs along the way.

- The five-year total return: April 2020 price £21.08 against £30.18 in 2025, a difference of £9.10 or 43%. Over that period the total distribution had been £3.78 per unit giving a total return of £12.88 or 61%.

- The UTP had holdings in three funds:
  - Monthly income (35%)

    A fund with the aim of generating a stable level of income. This had increased by 5.5% over one year and 6.5% pa over five years.

  - Global Income Growth (30%)

    An equity fund designed to generate income and superior growth. It had been a tough year with an increase of 1.4%, but 11.8% pa over five years.

  - Long Term Global Growth (35%)
    Also an equity fund but focusing on the companies that were likely to become winners in the future, companies that have a potential growth factor of five or more over the next five to ten years. The fund had grown by 7.7% over one year and 10.1% pa over five years.

- Recent market volatility was related to political uncertainty. Uncertainty led to investors selling and being reluctant to buy with the result that share prices fall. It was worth noting that the markets had rebounded and made up for the losses since 'Liberation Day'. Mr Harris noted that despite the volatility as a result of COVID, the war in Ukraine and Gaza, and Liberation Day in the USA, markets over that period had risen by 97.76%. Since 1945 the S&P 500 Index had fallen by more than 20% on 12 occasions, but 8 out of 12 times the markets had recovered all the losses within one year. The UTP was structured to mitigate volatility, and the message was to keep calm and carry on.

The Investment Committee had carried out the quinquennial review of the UTP. The performance of the fund managers Baillie Gifford had been assessed on three criteria:

- Investment philosophy and style, ESG policy and procedures, and performance (both absolute and relative). The Committee's findings were that Baillie Gifford had:
  - A strong financial performance demonstrated over a long period.

  - An ESG team of around 40 people with ESG processes fully embedded as a central component of Baillie Gifford's investment strategy.
  - A very high ranking across various metrics.

  - A strong relationship with the Investment Committee

The Investment Committee had concluded that Baillie Gifford had more than met the criteria in all areas of the assessment and had been open and co-operative throughout the process. The Investment Committee had therefore deemed reappointment of Baillie Gifford appropriate.

The Rev Bonnie Evans-Hills (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) noted this was wonderful news and should be celebrated. However, not all charges were able to participate in the investment programme as they could not afford investments. What would the Church look like if it pulled out of those areas of deprivation and only remained in wealthy areas? Areas of deprivation were growing and her charge was in such an area and could not afford investments. The charge was barely functioning financially but was growing and the people were good, faithful, dedicated and hard working but were never going to be able to afford what was being asked of them. Where was the investment from the SEC into these deprived areas?

The Chair suggested this question could be discussed during the provincial strategy session.

Mr Reuben Thomasson (Glasgow and Galloway) raised concern about ethical investment. He noted from the Annual Report of his charge that the three companies their money was most invested in were Microsoft, Amazon and Apple. The Vestry had issues with the labour practices within Amazon, the supply chain controversies inside Apple, specifically relating to the crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo where materials were sourced from mines using child labour. Microsoft over the last few years had been co-operating with the Saudi Arabian Government to build data centres which may or may not be being used by the Saudi Government to spy on their own citizens. Was there any way for us to protect ourselves from profiting from these sorts of practices?

Mr Harris noted he could only give a generalised answer which was that the Church had a General Synod approved Ethical Investment Policy to work to which was shared with Baillie Gifford and the investments were 100% compliant with that policy. Suggested that Mr Thomasson could raise his concerns with the Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG) to see whether the Group thought the concerns appropriate to be taken forward. This could then lead to consultation via the Investment Committee as to what the consequences of that might be. It then might be passed to the Standing Committee and ultimately back to the Investment Committee for approval or not. That might then result in a change to the ethical investment instructions by which the Committee was required to operate.

The Rev Amanda Fairclough (Argyll and The Isles) wished to provide additional context as a member of the Investment Committee and the EIAG. She thought it was underestimated how seriously Baillie Gifford took the management of the Church's investments. During the quinquennial review she had asked them if there was anything about the SEC which made it difficult for them to be in a business relationship with the SEC. Baillie Gifford were well informed.

The Chair thanked Mr Harris and the Investment Committee for their work.

2.2 Motion from the Diocese of Brechin

Bishop Swift (Chair of the EIAG) explained that the motion on the agenda from the Brechin Diocese had been passed the Saturday morning after the meeting between President Zelensky and President Trump had taken place. Diocesan Synod members had been trying to make sense of what was going on and subsequently felt that there were so many world issues now that 20 minutes on the agenda was not enough time to do justice to the range of these issues. The motion was therefore withdrawn but he urged Synod members to keep their prophetic voice.

2.3 The College of Bishops with the Standing Committee

The Primus introduced the joint presentation, 'Towards a Provincial Strategy'.

Ms Campbell explained that a Provincial Strategy with a single set of priorities would enable the Church to: target our resources, both human and financial, to address challenges and support opportunities by:

- Focusing the work of the Standing Committee, College of Bishops and our Boards and Committees
- Aligning the work of the General Synod Office
- Evaluating progress.

She said that the Secretary General would be leading GSO staff through a process of change which would equip them to support the boards and committees working at provincial level in a more joined up and effective way.

There were considerable financial resources available to spend across the Province. Standing Committee had the power to allocate significant resources, both the surpluses generated through investments and also releasing some reserves. The Committee, however, needed a basis for

applying these reserves. At its meeting in April the Committee had agreed to designate £10 million to invest in the provincial strategy in the next 5-7 years focusing on clear priorities. Those seeking resources would be asked to demonstrate the benefits of the funding secured and how any positive changes could be sustained and progress evaluated.

Bishop Armes acknowledged that some might be resistant to having a strategy, because of a fear of a top-down managerialism that imposed a central control, leaving no room for the movement of the Holy Spirit. He suggested that fearless thinking would open up possibilities. Wise stewardship was needed to use well the human, financial and physical resources to enable the Church to thrive. We should be creative and listen to the Holy Spirit, with a sense of accountability to God and the wider Church. The volunteers on committees and people in the GSO were our companions in this. Together, thoughtfulness of vestries, pastoral leadership of clergy and intriguing signs of new life in churches across the Province might witness to the activity of God. We, collectively, are full of vision, and a strategy would help to bring this vision into focus for our times and our context so that who we are and what we do are both true to God's call to our Church. It would be a fitting expression of our gratitude for God's abundant grace.

Mrs Whiteside said that there had been two days of externally facilitated sessions in January with the College of Bishops and Standing Committee. The College and Committee were asked to consider their vision for the future of the Church and what they would do if there were no financial restrictions. There was broad consensus around the following:

- Finance: using our financial resources strategically
- Ministry: increasing the numbers of stipendiary clergy and lay leaders
- Training: offering more and better training and development for clergy and laity
- Leadership: developing our senior leaders
- Young people: investing in, and develop, our youth work
- Governance: simplifying governance structures and review our Canons so that they are fit for purpose
- Operations - aligning the work of the GSO to deliver the strategy.

Bishop Swift then explained that a survey had been issued to all vestries seeking input to the strategy, and he urged Synod to encourage their charges to complete the survey as the information would answer some of the questions being dealt with today.

Synod members were then invited to discuss and contribute to formulating the strategy in table groups answering the following questions:

- What words or phrases would you use to describe the SEC?
- Taking an optimistic view, what is your vision for the SEC in the next seven to ten years?
- What would need to happen to realise your vision?

After the table groups had time to consider the three questions, the Primus selected a few tables to provide feedback. In response to the first question, one table described the SEC as liberal and traditional, forward-thinking, diverse, lacking boldness, often invisible, sometimes overly polite. In response to question two, another table group had a vision of a growing Church with increased community-engagement, stronger ecumenical ties, and more young people and families. And in answer to question three on how to realise their vision, a table group responded that there was a need to deploy clergy strategically, to provide more ministerial development opportunities post-ordination; and to have faith, courage and a willingness to take risks and fail.

The Secretary General thanked everyone for taking part in the discussion groups and said that she was looking forward to receiving the full feedback. This would be collated and analysed, along with the responses from the survey. Work on a first draft of the strategy would be presented to the Standing Committee meeting in September, then refined before deciding how this would be operationalised. Updates would be included in *inspires online*.

The Primus then announced to Synod that he had just received a message from Jerusalem: at 10.20am Israeli forces had fired inside the compound of the Al Ahli Anglican hospital in Gaza, killing five people, three of them journalists, plus hospital staff and patients. Archbishop Hosam had asked the Anglican Communion to hold them in prayer. There followed a few minutes silence to hold the people of Gaza and those who were there to help them in prayer.

SESSION 3: THE RT REV BISHOP OF GLASGOW AND GALLOWAY IN THE CHAIR

3.1 Mission Board: Provincial Youth Committee

The Rt Rev Nick Bundock (Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway) introduced himself as this was his first Synod and said that it was a privilege to be able to chair the session from the Provincial Youth Committee.

The Chair introduced the Provincial Youth Coordinator, Mrs Claire Benton-Evans, who said that she had come to Synod with a message of hope. She recognised that some churches might have only a few, if any, young people, and she wanted Synod to know that young people were still very much a part of the life of the SEC. Their growing faith, their desire to connect with other young Christians, and their commitment to serving others reminded her daily why we all have cause to hope for the Church.

A slide presentation of the provincial youth week, YEEK, was shown and then Mrs Benton-Evans reported the following:

- Numbers at YEEK were growing every year, and some young people had attended several years in a row. Some returned as leaders and there were some former delegates-turned-leaders who had been involved in YEEK for 25 years. She paid tribute to the youth leaders, most of whom were volunteers.
- The Committee wanted YEEK ministry to grow every year and would like to increase participation from all dioceses. At present five out of seven dioceses send delegates.
- Weekend youth events were also growing. Recent youth pilgrimages to Iona were so popular that they had received requests to make this a regular feature of the youth programme.
- Two youth pilgrimages to the Angus Glens had taken place, including a hill walking retreat. This was an invitation to meet God in the mountains, with hilltop prayers at sunset. One participant described the experience as 'bringing church into the light'. The PYC would like to do more of this and grow more young pilgrims.
- The Provincial Youth Committee would also like to have a youth and children's officer from every diocese to ensure equal representation across the Province and encourage the involvement of children and families at local level. Perhaps this could be discussed at Diocesan Synods to help grow youth ministry from the bottom up.

Addressing Synod via a pre-recorded video, the Provincial Youth Committee Chair, Phoebe Pryce, said that PYC members wanted to use their time at Synod to discuss issues important to young people. They wished the Church to work together, to transform unjust structures of society, challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation. Ms Pryce talked about gender inequality and violence against women, misogyny in everyday lives and in the media. She called for action by the SEC to help young women feel safe and respected.

Leanne Haig-Forsyth, Youth Officer Moray, Ross and Caithness, challenged Synod: Do we as 'Piskies' have a loud enough voice to take action to counter this rise in misogyny? Do you use your platform to combat gender violence? The Provincial Youth Committee called Synod members to challenge inappropriate behaviours, speak up against gender violence, support Thursdays in Black every week, listen to women with courtesy and respect, monitor social media and support women in leadership positions.

Mia Shanks, the 18-25 representative for the Diocese of Brechin, addressed Synod and spoke about climate change. She recognised the SEC's efforts with net zero, ethical investments and eco-congregations but said that it was not enough. The Fifth Mark of Mission was to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain and renew the Earth. It was a key pillar of our faith which must be applied across Church life. The climate crisis affected all of God's creation and there was a need to address climate issues as a matter of urgency. Four years before she had asked Synod to stop talking and start doing. Now she reiterated the need for the Church to address all aspects of climate justice.

Jadon Rongong, youth representative for Moray, Ross and Caithness, spoke about financial justice. He reflected on the concept of sin mentioned in the Gospels and the link to money. The Gospel of Luke spoke of excess and material things. One of the foundations of the Church was aiding those in poverty, feeding the hungry and not storing up wealth. He asked for reflection on where we were as a Church and whether we were following Christ's example, noting that many churches were making an effort to feed the hungry as part of their mission.

Sage Vause, youth representative for Edinburgh, spoke about being a queer, young Christian in the Church. They had always felt welcome in Episcopalian spaces, but this was not always the case in other denominations. They did worry about other people's opinions but believed that Jesus was accepting of different views on gender. People in the Church should not judge others, as Jesus did not judge. They went on to say that it was important to include young people in church decisions and to actively listen to what young people were saying. Synod members were invited to consider how to make young people welcome in their church.

The Rev Canon Tembu Rongong, Convener, Provincial Youth Committee, wished to hear from Synod members and introduced three questions to be discussed in table groups:

Gender justice: What can your church do to support gender justice and combat gender-based violence?

Climate justice: What is your church doing to combat climate change?

Youth inclusion: In your church what are you doing to reach out to and engage young people?

Rev Rongong said that the feedback was of genuine interest to the PYC and thanked Synod members for taking the time to address the questions.
Rev Rongong then gave a summary of what the PYC was planning:

- YEEK would take place from 27 July to 2 August 2025. Synod members were asked to encourage young people to attend as there were still places available.
- In October they would be hosted by St John's in Aberdeen for their autumn provincial weekend.
- They looked forward to a pilgrimage on Iona in October 2026.

The Chair thanked all the Provincial Youth Committee members for a stimulating presentation. A speaker card had been received from the Rev Amanda Fairclough (Argyll and The Isles) who wished to say 'well done'. She said that when she was young she did not have courage to speak up so urged the youth to keep going and to keep speaking up.

SESSION 4: THE RT REV THE BISHOP OF ABERDEEN AND ORKNEY IN THE CHAIR

4.1 Faith and Order Board: The 1700th Anniversary of the Council of Nicaea
The Council of Nicaea and Anglican Praxis

The Chair introduced the Rev Canon Prof Charlotte Methuen, who then gave a presentation on the history and background to the Council of Nicaea (325 C.E.).

Following the presentation, members broke into their table groups to look closely at the Nicene Creed. They were then invited to share what they noticed in the text.

Responses included the importance of Christology and the dual nature of Christ, and the emphasis on one God and one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

Prof Methuen explained that the Creed was intended to argue against some of the heresies prevalent at the time, for example, polytheism, Arianism, and the view that the physical world was evil.

Prof Methuen finished the session with a comparison of the drafting of the Creed at the First Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E. and, following this some 60 years later, the changes made at the First Council of Constantinople in 381 C.E.

The Chair then thanked Professor Methuen for her presentation.

SESSION FIVE: THE RT REV THE BISHOP OF ARGYLL AND THE ISLES IN THE CHAIR

5.1 Faith and Order Board: Committee on Canons

Canons for First Reading

Canon 4 Of the Calling and Election of Bishops to Vacant Sees

The Chair introduced Dr Samuel White, Convener of the Committee on Canons, who explained that the changes which were proposed to this Canon were in two sections, section 12 and 26.

He went on to explain the background to the error in Canon Four which required a re-reading of the Canon. He apologised for the necessity of bringing this back to General Synod so soon after Canon Four had been adopted by Synod.

Dr White began with section 26 and outlined the difference between the current version and the revised section presented. Section 26 outlined what happened when a number of votes have taken place inconclusively as part of an electoral process and there were more than two candidates remaining. With the current version, which was an earlier draft where the vote was taken in Houses, it was possible that two candidates could be chosen by one House and another House could choose two different candidates. The change proposed a single vote which removed this impasse.

Section 12 dealt with the time limit on the process. At present the time limit ran for twelve months from the date of the vacancy arising. It was proposed that the date which started the process should be the date of the issuing of the Mandate. Dr White outlined a couple of reasons why this current time limit was problematic, one being in the event of the death of a bishop in office. This change allowed for a smoother and less truncated process in such a situation.

The Primus then proposed, and the Rt Rev Andrew Swift (Bishop of Brechin) seconded, the following motion:

> "That the amended text of Canon 4 be read for the first time."

A point of order was raised by the Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth (Glasgow and Galloway) who pointed out that the text which was printed in the papers sent to members was different to the text that was contained in the online PDF; this made it difficult to discuss or vote on.

Provost Holdsworth queried whether it would be possible to move to the next business and asked that the text be printed off over lunchtime for Synod members to consider on their return.

The Chair responded that, with Synod's consent, this item would continue after lunch when a printed copy of the correct text would be made available to them. He explained that there was no difference between the two texts (that printed in the Synod papers and in the online PDF) and that the online text was in fact correct, the only difference being that the red tracked changes highlighting the difference between the current and suggested amended version was not used.

Members agreed to suspend this item and conclude after lunch.

SESSION FIVE RESUMED: THE RT REV THE BISHOP OF ARGYLL AND THE ISLES IN THE CHAIR

5.1 Faith and Order Board: Committee on Canons

Canons for First Reading

Canon 4 Of the Calling and Election of Bishops to Vacant Sees

Dr Samuel White, (Convener, Committee on Canons) was not present for the second half of this session due to other commitments. In his absence, the Primus outlined the process for this vote and the difference from the usual format. This vote constituted the First Reading for the amended text of Canon Four which would be followed by online Diocesan Synod meetings for each diocese where this First Reading would be discussed. This would then be followed by a discussion at the Faith and Order Board, followed by a Second Reading on 9 September at an online General Synod meeting. He reminded the members that all diocesan and provincial Synods must commence with the Eucharist.

He summarised the reasons for bringing this motion to General Synod and stressed the importance of dealing with the error as soon as possible. He spoke of the difficulties in the election process for Argyll and The Isles which had been triggered by the sudden death of Bishop Keith Riglin. The process had been shortened by two months as Canon Four currently required that the electoral process for a new bishop be completed within 12 months of a vacancy arising. The change proposed would mean that the 12-month time limit would start from the date upon which the Mandate was issued.

Bishop Swift began by reminding members that the current revised Canon Four had worked very well in both elections in Argyll and The Isles and in Glasgow and Galloway Dioceses. The issue with section 26 related to a technicality in the voting procedure in Houses which could derail the election process.

Dr Martin Auld (Aberdeen and Orkney) informed Synod that he had served four or five years on the Canon Four Review Group. He told members the original period of 12 months from the issuing of the Mandate was to allow the process to progress swiftly and clearly. His concern now was that the timeframe for the issuing of the Mandate had no clarity. He would like to see direction included for the Mandate to be issued within two to three months of a vacancy being announced.

Bishop Strange suggested that dioceses could have this conversation in preparation for the Second Reading and felt this was a reasonable point to be considered.

The motion was then put to the vote in houses and the outcome of the vote was as follows:

House of Clergy: 56 in favour, none against, no abstentions
House of Laity: 51 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention
House of Bishops: 7 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

The motion was passed.

5.2 Standing Committee: Accounts, Budget and Quota Overview

Accounts

Ms Bridget Campbell, Convener of Standing Committee, referred Synod to the Annual Accounts within the Synod papers. She wished to thank all members of Standing Committee for their service. She particularly wished to thank the contributions of two members who were standing down as members of Standing Committee: Bishop John Armes for his wisdom and kindness, and Provost Murray, for her willingness to roll up her sleeves and help deliver projects. The College of Bishops

had chosen Bishop David Railton to replace Bishop Armes. The new Convener of Mission Board would be elected on Saturday. There would also be an election to replace Ms Campbell as Convener of the Standing Committee. She expressed her gratitude for the experience to serve the Church and urged Synod members to vote for Cathy Johnston.

Ms Campbell brought to Synod's attention some of the recent personnel changes in the SEC. She reminded members that Malcolm Bett, the Provincial Treasurer, had retired in December 2024 and she wished to record Standing Committee's thanks for his many years of dedicated service. She also said that it had been a great joy for her to attend the Consecrations of two new bishops since the last Synod: Bishop David Railton in Argyll and The Isles and Bishop Nick Bundock in Glasgow and Galloway, both of which had been happy occasions.

In 2024, Standing Committee had set itself the following objectives:

- Clarifying the strategic direction of the SEC.
- Encouraging the Mission Board and College of Bishops to promote Church growth.
- Supporting the SEC to work towards net zero.
- Reviewing staffing structures in the General Synod Office.
- Helping the Church to respond to financial pressures.

Since the previous Synod we had welcomed the new Secretary General, Dr Dee Bird; Dr Patricia Krus, the Chief Operating Officer; and James Lloyd, the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer. Standing Committed had agreed to grow the team in the GSO to include a Chief Operating Officer because it recognised that a new approach to leadership and management of the office was needed. The new senior team had been reviewing policies, investing in training and developing staff. She had been heartened at how the new senior leadership team had got stuck in and worked its way to implement change. She also praised the GSO staff for welcoming the new team and adapting to new ways of working. A challenge for the GSO in 2024 was the cyber security breach to which it had been subjected last summer and she commended the staff for their response to this incident which had disrupted the normal work of the office.

Turning to finances, Ms Campbell reported: as forecast at General Synod in 2024 and planned by the Standing Committee, the General Fund went into deficit in 2024 which meant that the Committee drew from reserves to fund activities at provincial level; it also expected to do this in 2025. In setting the General Fund budget for 2026, Standing Committee planned for a further deficit so that the vital work could continue. This could be afforded because the investments which supported the General Fund had once again performed strongly. There was continued considerable scope to sell investments in order to top up income without damaging long term viability.

It was fortunate that there were significant resources to be spent across the Province and Standing Committee had the power to allocate resources; however, input from across the Church was needed to help determine the correct basis for doing that. As mentioned previously, Standing Committee had agreed to allocate £10 million to invest in the provincial strategy over the next five years.

Quota would be discussed and agreed on Saturday, but Ms Campbell explained that there was a lot of potential for change in how available resources were distributed across the SEC in future. In the meantime, there was a system in place and we were coming to the end of a programme put in place to keep quota down following Covid. The total quota planned for 2026 was to be increased by 4.75% to £785,000 in line with projections. This would be put to vote on Saturday.

Mr Stephen Goodyear (Aberdeen and Orkney) asked the Convener to give context to the amount budgeted for legal fees for the year. Would this need revision for this year or next year? Ms Campbell noted that this was difficult to predict in advance. There were some further Canon 54 complaints which would require funding for legal services to address them.

Mr Goodyear proposed that Synod should not accept the Annual Report and Accounts as he felt that paragraphs 25-27 on Aberdeen and Orkney could be misleading. The Annual Report and Accounts stated that the Canon 54 process had been followed, but he believed that it had not. According to Canon 65 the SEC was required to produce an impartial determination of "the truth or otherwise of allegations of abuse against clergy". Canon 65 and the safeguarding policy bind the Procurator in his capacity as the Procurator of the Church and the SEC claimed that the Canon 54 process was the only mechanism by which it could deal with allegations of abuse against clergy. He argued that on these bases the Canon 54 process in which the Procurator performed a key role must naturally produce the required determination of the truth of the allegations against clergy for it to be valid. He asserted that the process terminated last year did not produce that impartial determination despite the Procurator indicating that there was a sufficiency of evidence to provide a realistic prospect of convicting the clergy person in question had the matter been allowed to go forward to the Clergy Discipline Tribunal. Dr Goodyear asserted that, during the reporting year, the SEC had been asked by several people whether the required impartial determination about the truth of the allegations had been made. Dr Goodyear argued that it had never confirmed that the required decision was made; if it had been, then Canon 65 and the safeguarding policy indicated that it should be shared. He went on to say that the Report also claimed that Standing Committee had no power to intervene in the complaints process. He did not believe this as, he said, Anderson Strathearn, instructed by the SEC, had confirmed in writing that Standing Committee had intervened in the process. Could the Chair or Standing Committee confirm that the allegations were true or not? He said that the SEC had failed to answer this question for eight months and had blocked a general motion on safeguarding preventing this and wider safeguarding issues being discussed.

The Rev Amanda Fairclough (Argyll and The Isles) asked if the matter raised by Dr Goodyear was in keeping with the nature of the debate as it did not relate to the motion at hand. The Accounts were subjected to external audit and she was confident that the external auditors had taken a true and fair view, and therefore the Accounts should be accepted.

Ms Campbell responded that the Canon 54 process concluded after the Procurator, a KC who was independent of the SEC, decided not to lead evidence to trial. His reasons were published and were available on the SEC website, and his decision was accepted by the Clergy Discipline Tribunal. She had no wish to discuss legal matters which had reached a conclusion.

Ms Campbell then proposed, and Mrs Whiteside, seconded, the following motion:

> "That this Synod accept the Annual Report and Accounts of the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church for the financial year ended 31 December 2024."

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 106 in favour, 3 against, 9 abstentions.

The Chair thanked the Convener for her work on Standing Committee and her support for new bishops.

5.3 Mission Board: Reflections on the Achievements of the Mission Board

Provost Murray (Convener, the Mission Board) gave a report on the work of the Mission Board over the previous five years.

She thanked all who had worked for the Board over the last five years. The main achievements of the Board in the last year included youth work, the Global Partnerships Scholarship Fund, community work, the responses to the nuclear weapons and assisted dying debates, as well as grants to alleviate child poverty and one-off mission grants.

At a recent meeting, the Board considered the questions: What does successful mission work look like? Who does it? Where does it happen? How do you know that it is successful? At the core of the Church's mission are our relationships with God, one another and the community, with success understood as when the Church is seen as a source for good in the community.

Reflecting on mission in the context of developing a strategy for the Province, the Board considered what it would do if there were no constraints: it would build a missional, not just a survivalist, culture; it would prioritise good communication; recruit for pioneer mission and have the capacity to fund grants. Both money and people would be needed.

Looking to the future, the use of buildings, partnership with other charities, local mission including children's and youth work were important. She urged the Church to invest as much in its mission and people as it does in its buildings.

Bishop Railton thanked Sarah Murray for her work chairing the Mission Board.

5.4 Standing Committee: Charity Governance and Trusteeship

Mr Gavin McEwan (Synod Assessor) gave a presentation on the responsibilities of trustees. In his introduction he outlined the training he provides to vestry members in the Diocese of Edinburgh and gave a brief history of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

His presentation focused on the role of charity trustees and specifically, vestry members as trustees; the legal duties of trustees; the relationship between charity law and Canon law; risk and liability; and the limits of OSCR's role.

Mr McEwan mentioned the upcoming regulatory changes from OSCR, including the expanded rules for automatic disqualification of trustees and the charity trustee register which would come into effect from 30 June 2025.

Mr McEwan said that it was worth reviewing the guidance from OSCR and considering how your own charge may be affected as these rules are to take effect this summer.

The Rev Andrew Elliott (Aberdeen and Orkney) noted that one of the concerns of his vestry was the issue of liability. One of the charges also had an interesting feature in its constitution which stated that any clergy associated with that particular charge automatically became a member of the vestry and by that a trustee; however, there were many retired priests who were licensed in his charge. The question was how enforceable was the liability, as in some cases people had become trustees without realising that they were trustees.

Mr McEwan responded that he should not give advice on specific cases, but the general principle was that anyone appointed as a trustee under a constitution was a trustee; but if appointed in an *ex officio* capacity they could resign and therefore extract themselves from charity trustee duties.

The Chair thanked Mr McEwan for his presentation.

5.5 Standing Committee: Legacy of Slavery

The Primus gave a presentation on the Legacy of Slavery Working Group. Last year there had been an ecumenical pilgrimage to Jamaica which raised issues around the legacy of slavery. Given the historical context, it was important to consider how to repair relationships and how to refresh our life together. The SEC was looking at developing a project that would focus both on the historical impact of slavery and on building future relationships. The aim was to investigate the SEC's involvement in the slave trade, to understand the role slavery had had in the SEC and to work towards repairing relationships.

He explained that buildings were built from money which came directly or indirectly from the slave trade. We need to know the sources of funding for the church buildings in the SEC.

A working group had now been established and had met, and a Chair proposed. The SEC would partner with other organisations including the USPG and aimed to appoint an external researcher to investigate the historic links the SEC had to slavery. The aim was to produce recommendations and

guidance to help restore relations with churches affected, largely in the West Indies. The SEC would work with the Church of Scotland, EMU partners and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland to research historical links and to apologise and restore relations. The Church needed to learn from the past to address racism and discrimination.

Finally, the Primus asked for prayer for the Working Group.

SESSION SIX: THE RIGHT REV THE BISHOP OF BRECHIN IN THE CHAIR

6.1 Standing Committee: Provincial Environment Group

The Rt Rev Ian Paton (Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane), Convener of the Provincial Environment Group (PEG), began by thanking the members of PEG, in particular the Vice Convener, Cathy Johnston. He also thanked the Net Zero Team for their work. Synod had spoken of using financial resources: the establishment of the Net Zero Team was an example of the Church using its resources to act.

The Chair then invited Mr Paul Williams, Net Zero Delivery Director, to address Synod. Mr Williams thanked Synod members for the useful conversations he had held with them in the last couple of days and began his presentation, starting with details of his background. His parents had been missionaries in Madagascar and this experience had been a formative part of his early life.

During his presentation, he spoke of the importance of the values of discipleship, justice and hope in relation to combating climate change. He then pointed to the work that the SEC had been doing in relation to net zero. There were many examples around the Province of the Church's commitment to addressing climate change. The Net Zero Team was organising road shows to enable sharing of ideas. The Church also had a strategic partnership with the Benefact Trust and there were opportunities for charges to apply for grants.

Mr Williams then invited comments or questions.

Rev Amanda Fairclough (Argyll and The Isles) said that the Net Zero Team had not made an effort to engage with her and felt that the information she had been provided was not adequate.

Others said they were grateful for the support received from the Team and there was specific mention of the very useful resource provided through the Net Zero Portal.

Dr Stephen Goodyear (Aberdeen and Orkney) queried the Net Zero Team's emphasis on green tariffs and asked that the Team provide a written report of their work in future, outlining the funding obtained from external sources.

The Chair concluded the session by thanking Mr Williams for his excellent presentation.

6.2 Faith and Order Board: Liturgy Committee

The Rev Canon Dr Nicholas Taylor (Convener, Liturgy Committee) brought the following motions to General Synod and noted that the Liturgy Committee had now caught up with much of the work which had been delayed by the Covid pandemic.

Removal of out of date liturgies from the Schedule to Canon 22

Second Reading - Opinions from Dioceses

St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane:

- The cost of purchasing new books was raised. This might be difficult for some charges. However, it was also stated that this would not be mandatory immediately and books could be replaced as and when needed.
- The ability to harmonise parts of the 1970 and 1982 liturgies had allowed creativity. Would that still be allowable?

Dr Taylor confirmed that there was no intention to require churches to remove these liturgies from their shelves.

Dr Taylor proposed, and the Primus seconded, the following motion:

> "That the proposal that the following liturgies be deleted from the Schedule to Canon 22 with effect from the Sunday next before Advent in 2025 be read for the second time:
>
> - Scottish Liturgy (Scottish Episcopal Church) (1982) listed as item 6 in the Schedule;
> - Scottish Liturgy 1982 Eucharistic Prayers II-V (Scottish Episcopal Church) (1996) listed as item 11 in the Schedule."

The motion was then put to the vote in houses and passed as follows:

House of Clergy: 51 in favour, none against, 3 abstentions
House of Laity: 47 in favour, none against, 2 abstentions
House of Bishops: 6 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

The motion was passed.

First Reading

Canon 22 Removal of Baptism and Burial liturgies from the Schedule

Dr Taylor proposed, and Bishop Paton seconded, the following motion:

> "That the proposal that the following liturgies be deleted from the Schedule to Canon 22 with effect from the Sunday next before Advent in 2026 be read for the first time:
>
> - Baptism of Infants (1968) listed as item 3 in the Schedule.
> - Burial of the Dead (1969) listed as item 4 in the Schedule."

The Primus announced that it had been brought to his attention that copies of the Baptism of Infants 1969 and the Burial of the Dead 1969 had recently been found.

It was decided to withdraw the motion and the Faith and Order Board and the Liturgy Committee would look at these texts.

Addition of a new Liturgy to the Schedule to Canon 22

First reading of Blessing of a Marriage (2025)

Dr Taylor then proposed, and Bishop Paton seconded, the following motion:

> "That the proposal that Blessing of a Marriage (2025) be added to the Schedule to Canon 22 be read for the first time."

Dr Taylor reminded members that this had been in Experimental Use following Covid. He invited questions.

Dr Beth Routledge (ACC Representative) expressed disappointment with this liturgy; she felt that it curtailed the options available to clergy as well as removing the poetry and beauty of the current version. She recognised the work that the Liturgy Committee had put into this text but preferred the original.

Rev Godwin Chimara (Aberdeen and Orkney) spoke in support of the revised liturgy. He felt it reflected the diversity of the SEC, that for those coming from abroad faced legal difficulties in having their marriage recognised. This new liturgy addressed this problem by recognising the existence of the marriage legally.

Provost Holdsworth (Glasgow and Galloway) disagreed and referred to his own experience with using the current Blessing with Nigerian couples and supported retaining the current version of the liturgy. He agreed with Rev Beth Routledge regarding the curtailing of options.

The Rev Rachael Wright (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) raised the issue of secular marriage and cautioned using language which might indicate a second marriage. She wanted to be clear about the use of non-gendered language and when this would be extended to the marriage liturgy.

The motion was put to the vote in houses and passed as follows:

House of Clergy: 40 in favour, 8 against, 7 abstentions
House of Laity: 35 in favour, 8 against, 9 abstentions
House of Bishops: 7 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

Addition to the Calendar of Eric Liddell

The Rev Nick Bowry presented this motion to General Synod and provided a brief outline of the life and work of Eric Liddell and the esteem in which he was held by his contemporaries.

The Rev Amy Jo Philip (Edinburgh) added her voice in support of this motion.

The Rev Fiona Bennet, (United Reformed Church) spoke in support of the inclusion of Eric Liddell's name to the Calendar and added that stories of his work in supporting those in dire situations were inspiring.

Mr Petko Marinov (Glasgow and Galloway) commended the inclusion of Eric Liddell but noted this was another man being proposed. He drew Synod's attention to the fact that, for the first six months of this year, 67 names were those of men and only eight were women. He asked that the Liturgy Committee look for more women to be proposed for inclusion to the Calendar.

Dr Taylor acknowledged the lack of women's names and hoped that more people would come forward with the names of women for inclusion in the Scottish Calendar.

The Primus then proposed, and Bishop Railton seconded, the following motion:

> "That, upon the recommendation of the Faith and Order Board, the Scottish Calendar (1991) be amended by the inclusion of Eric Liddell."

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 95 in favour, 4 against, 6 abstentions.

The Primus then thanked Dr Taylor for all his work on the Liturgy Committee.

SESSION SEVEN: THE RIGHT REV THE BISHOP OF EDINBURGH IN THE CHAIR

Before the session began, Mr Gavin McEwan (Assessor) updated members about the automatic disqualification rules from trusteeship. The Scottish Parliament had just released the date and the rules would commence from 31 August 2025; waivers could be applied from 30 June.

7.1 Faith and Order Board: Inter-Church Relations Committee (ICRC)

Saint Ninian Declaration

Prof Methuen (Convenor of the ICRC) began by providing updates from the ICRC. It had been agreed some time ago with the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and the Church of Scotland that an ecumenical audit would be carried out. She informed members that churches would receive a request for feedback on their ecumenical involvement and that she was interested in gathering stories whether positive or negative. People were encouraged to engage with the process and she apologised to the other denominations involved for the SEC's lateness in carrying out our part of this work.

She thanked Bishop John Armes for his work with the ICRC praising his gifts of wisdom and insight as well as his personal commitment to ecumenism.

She gave her apologies for the Saturday session of General Synod explaining that she would be taking part in the signing of an agreement of full communion between the Lutheran Church of Bavaria and the Episcopal Church of the USA (the Augsburg Agreement).

Prof Methuen then introduced the Saint Ninian Declaration as the "Declaration of Friendship", between the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Conference of Bishops of the Catholic Church in Scotland, which was a slightly different declaration from that of the St Andrew Declaration. It affirmed a deepening relationship between Episcopalians and Roman Catholics in Scotland.

Bishop Ian Paton spoke as the SEC delegate for the 2024 IARCCUM (the International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission) meeting in Rome and Canterbury where delegates considered the question of what could be done together. A comment made during that meeting had stuck with him: "After four centuries of conflict and separation, the Catholic and the Anglican Communion have now been on a walk towards reconciliation for almost six decades and yet in our churches we have barely begun to do all that is possible to do together". He noted that both the RC and SEC already have agreements with the Church of Scotland; it was important now to have one between ourselves. He emphasised that this was a declaration of friendship and that, as in any friendship, people could sometimes disagree. This was not about 100% agreement. He commended the Declaration to Synod.

The Rev Ross Blackman (Ecumenical Relations, Church of Scotland) spoke from the floor. He extended his greetings from the Church of Scotland to GS25. He recalled the General Assembly's conversations on the Nicene Creed, that we each accept one God, one baptism and one faith. He was delighted to see this declaration of friendship being presented. He also endorsed Prof Methuen's challenge to the SEC to engage with the Ecumenical Audit and continue this important part of the Churches' work.

The Rev Canon John McLuckie (Edinburgh) spoke in support of this motion. He stated he felt a very close spiritual affinity with his local RC church and encouraged more shared work together at church level. It was possible to go further.

The Rev Keith Thomasson (Glasgow and Galloway) also commended this motion recalling his involvement with the choir in the Metropolitan Church in Liverpool and how welcome he had felt. He outlined the ecumenical work which was taking place in his church in Troon and supported the motion.

Mr Tim Hatton (Edinburgh) spoke of his experience in Hawick in the Scottish Borders where St Cuthbert's Church had shared its building with the local RC church. During Advent they had shared an Advent Study group as well as a Carol Service.

The Rev Ferdinand von Prondsynski (Aberdeen and Orkney) spoke in favour of the declaration and asked if there was more that could be done at local church level. Was there a programme of action which could be taken?

The Rev Bonnie Evans-Hills (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane Clergy) spoke of her inter-religious dialogue work across the country and locally with her church in Leven. She commended the motion warmly.

The Rev Andrew Elliott (Aberdeen and Orkney) spoke of his close working relationship with his RC colleague in Shetland based on mutual curiosity and friendship. He commended the motion.

The Rev Amy Jo Philip (Edinburgh) reflected that ecumenism was in her blood having grown up with the Congregational Church and the URC.

The Rev Ryan Bennett (Edinburgh) spoke appreciatively of the visit of Archbishop Leo to Christ Church in Morningside.

The Rev Lesley-ann Craddock (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) related her work with the local RC church in St Andrews but noted that as a woman, there were barriers to worship despite a close working relationship.

The Very Rev Dr Emsley Nimmo (Aberdeen and Orkney) had served on ARCIC and recommended the text from the 1971 Eucharistic Doctrine which he thought worth republishing as a teaching document. He considered there were opportunities where churches were closing and the chance to share resources.

Mrs Elizabeth Roads (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) noted that there were no RC churches remaining locally but shared worship with RC members. They were now sharing their church with Church of Scotland members who were losing their church and could not welcome this motion more strongly.

Prof Methuen responded to the speakers from the floor thanking them for the wealth of experiences they had shared. She agreed that the 1971 paper was a very helpful exploration of eucharistic ministry and noted this could be made available on the website.

What Pope Leo XIV had said encouraged us to think hopefully about the way forward together and this was a timely agreement. She mentioned work in mainland Europe where there was shared communion between RC and Reformed churches. This was an encouraging picture.

The Primus spoke to his personal experience of sharing church buildings. He said that today we made a public statement to the people of Scotland which refuted the narrative of division between our Churches.

The Primus then proposed, and Bishop Paton seconded, the following motion:

"That the Saint Ninian Declaration as set out in the Synod Papers be approved and adopted."

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 112 in favour, none against, 2 abstentions.

The Most Rev Leo Cushley, Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh, Roman Catholic Church was asked to address General Synod.

He thanked General Synod for this vote which was very dear to his heart. He told of being commissioned by Pope Francis in 2013 to be the Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh and to return to Scotland after decades of living abroad and was appointed President for Ecumenical Relations. Many things had changed out of all recognition in Scotland. Much was better. He noted that the ecumenical work since Vatican II had moved on considerably. The work which produced the declaration signed by the RC Church and the Church of Scotland was warmly welcomed by the Vatican. This was unique within the RC Church.

He explained that he had been asked by Bishop Keith Riglin why the SEC had not been approached and expressed real gratitude that this had now come to pass.

Bishop Armes thanked Bishop Paton, Prof Methuen and the ICRC for their work on the Declaration.

SESSION EIGHT: THE RT REV BISHOP OF ST ANDREWS, DUNKELD AND DUNBLANE IN THE CHAIR

8.1 Bishop Paton said Synod would now receive a presentation on Assisted Dying, a timely topic as the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill was making its way through Scottish Parliament.

The Rev Dr Hamilton Inbadas (Moray, Ross and Caithness) introduced himself by saying that he had over twenty years' experience in palliative and end-of-life care as a chaplain and researcher in a variety of contexts. While emphasising that he was not an expert in assisted dying as such, he spoke from the perspective of pastoral practice, medical ethics, academic research, and theology.

In relation to the debate on assisted dying, he noted that both supporters and opponents often hold the same principles — such as compassion and comfort — but apply them differently. For some, comfort means supporting life to its natural end; for others it may include helping to end life to relieve suffering.

He discussed the Hippocratic Oath, clarifying that its original prohibition on giving a deadly drug was directed at political killings in ancient Greece, not end-of-life care, and is now used more as an ethical reasoning tool than a binding pledge. He distinguished active, passive, and indirect euthanasia, and explained the shift from "physician-assisted suicide" to the broader, more neutral term "assisted dying".

Outlining international legal contexts, he noted countries where assisted dying is permitted and Scotland's current legislative process, which is now at stage two of consideration. Turning to palliative care, he presented global comparisons showing the UK's leading provision, but contrasted this with personal experiences of both poor deaths in Scotland and peaceful deaths in countries with fewer resources. He criticised the lack of progress on Scotland's 2015 Strategic Framework for Action on Palliative and End of Life Care and the 2024 proposal for a legal right to palliative care.

Dr Inbadas examined the current Assisted Dying Bill in detail, raising concerns over the use of the phrase "limits of palliative care" when provision is still inadequate, the absence of a time-frame definition for "terminal illness", and the inclusion of emotional and anticipatory suffering alongside physical pain as grounds.

He acknowledged the work that had been carried out in the SEC, both by the Church in Society Committee and the Scottish Episcopal Institute.

In conclusion, Dr Inbadas expressed his personal view that assisted dying was likely to become law in Scotland. He urged the Church to prepare by equipping clergy and laity, revisiting pastoral offices, and developing resources to handle sensitive conversations with compassion and theological depth.

SESSION NINE: THE MOST REV THE PRIMUS IN THE CHAIR

9.1 The Primus briefly introduced the private members' motion, Motion 17 and said that he had received a number of speaker's cards and some amendments in relation to the motion.

Synod was asked by the Chair to agree via a show of hands whether or not to treat the Rev Amanda Fairclough's amendment as a Counter Motion to the printed Motion 17. Synod was advised that should this proposal be rejected, Ms Fairclough's motion would be treated as an Amendment to the printed motion.

Motion 17c was proposed by the Rev Amanda Fairclough and seconded by the Very Rev Alison Simpson (Moray, Ross and Caithness):

> "This Synod affirms that all people are made and loved by God. Synod also recognises the deep hurt caused by recent developments in gender/sexual politics. That we might grow together in

mutual understanding, Synod asks the College of Bishops to hold discussions in their dioceses and bring back a comprehensive summary of views expressed to next year's General Synod."

Provost Holdworth queried why this was being treated as a counter motion instead of a Rule 10 Motion? The Assessor confirmed that the amendment had been tabled as an amendment, but, as it was such a substantive amendment, it was felt that this took on more of the character of a counter motion. If Synod agreed, it could be treated as a counter motion. The Rules of Order were finely focused on what was a counter motion or not, but this did not fall exactly into counter motion territory.

The Primus suggested inviting Synod to say it was willing, by a simple majority, to treat this as a counter motion as a means of moving forward.

Beth Routledge (ACC representative) asked, if Synod agreed on a show of hands, did that mean the original Motion 17 would not be debated at all?

The Assessor confirmed that the original motion had not yet been presented. An additional amendment to that motion would be proposed, followed by the introduction of a counter motion. Voting would proceed in stages: first on any amendments to the original motion, then on any amendments to the counter motion. After that, Synod would vote between the original motion and the counter motion to indicate a preference. The motion receiving the most votes would become the substantive motion. If Synod did not accept this as a counter motion it simply became an amendment of the motion.

Upon request, the Assessor reiterated the process. Motion 17, as included in the papers, would first have a minor amendment proposed by the Rev Amy Jo Philip. A further amendment to this motion would also be introduced and discussed shortly. In addition, Ms Fairclough's substantive motion was to be treated by Synod as a counter motion.

Synod would be asked to vote on the proposed amendments, resulting in two distinct motions: the original motion and the counter motion. A final vote would then be held between these two. The motion receiving the greater number of votes would become the substantive motion on which Synod would ultimately vote.

Mr McEwan confirmed that it would be possible to submit amendments to the counter motion when accepted.

Synod voted by show of hands to reject Motion 17c as a countermotion. Motion 17c would therefore become a motion for amendment for the motion about to be debated.

The Primus then invited the Rev Amy Jo Philip to introduce Motion 17. Ms Philip began by thanking Standing Committee for including this motion and said that it was important for this debate to be led by a trans person. 'The SEC welcomes you' was a familiar phrase and Synod had heard already this morning how the SEC was a welcoming and inclusive place. However, trans+ and inter-sex people were fearful of where they were welcomed and more so since the recent Supreme Court ruling. There had been a rise in abuse against them. She felt personally welcome in the SEC but queried whether her trans siblings were and did they know it? This motion was about making that welcome clear. It was not about the Supreme Court ruling or the Equality and Human Rights Commission's subsequent guidance or the Equality Act 2010. The motion did not commit the SEC to any particular political policy platform vis a vis trans+ people. It was not all about trans women. The motion was also about trans men, non-binary people gender non-conforming people, and inter-sex people too. It did not say that those who opposed their rights were not welcome. Synod had already heard that day that the Church had found ways to walk together on sensitive issues such as re-marriage of divorced people and same-sex marriage. The most important thing to say was that you are a beloved child of God and trans+ people needed to hear that. Ms Philip wanted to emphasise that respect, love and compassion in this debate was needed. There was an opportunity for the Church to be prophetic.

The Rev Canon Dr Jennifer Holden, who was seconding the motion, spoke of her own experience and journey of faith. She asked Synod to listen, consider and respect one another. The Church rejoiced in saying that it was a welcoming church but the question was asked why the motion needed to specify specific groups. All were welcome, but being known by and being called by name was important. A member of the Youth Committee had said how they rejoiced in the welcome they received in the SEC and this was about extending this welcome to all, that all may know it. She said that naming some by name did not diminish others. God's love was immeasurable. It was important to state that part 3 of the motion 'accorded the same dignity, respect and rights' is talking about natural rights, not legal rights, the rights accorded to all people. This motion was grounded in our call to love one another and to love God.

Motion 17:

"This Synod affirms that transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming people:

1. are made in the image of God,
2. are loved by God,
3. should be accorded the same dignity, respect and rights as cisgender people and
4. can and should participate fully in the life, worship, mission and ministry of the Scottish Episcopal Church."

Motion 17A - Amendment 1 was proposed by the Rev Amy Jo Phillip, and seconded by the Rev Canon Dr Jennifer Holden:

> "That the first sentence should read: "This Synod affirms that transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming, and inter-sex people:"

The amendment to the motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 100 in favour, 4 against, 7 abstentions.

The Chair opened up the debate.

The Rev Roger Dyer (Aberdeen and Orkney) said that as a straight white man from England, he wished to be the best unique version of himself and become as much like Jesus as he could be. His hope was that individually and collectively we would grow in our holiness. He encouraged Synod to vote for the motion so we could grow in our holiness.

Mrs Margaret Hodder (Aberdeen and Orkney), spoke for the motion. She had experienced difference all her life and knew what it was like to be unwelcome in a church. She had experienced a life affirming visit to a church in Brighton where she met trans people for the first time and had been made to feel welcome. That church had been for everyone, not only trans people, and everyone worshipped together. She would like to see every church in Scotland affirm the rights of trans people, inter-sex people, people with disabilities - everyone.

Mr Rongong wished to reiterate that he wanted to welcome all to our church, which was especially important for the young people who had spoken on Thursday.

Mrs Deborah Munday (Moray, Ross and Caithness) noted that, as a former police officer, she had read suicide letters from trans people who had killed themselves because they felt so hated and did not feel accepted. She urged the Church to be known to be welcome to everyone and to be safe for everyone.

Bishop Paton (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) noted the issue was complex and multi-faceted involving personal needs and practical provisions. Different freedoms, needs and hopes were made to compete with each other. Calm heads and kind hearts were needed on all sides. He urged Synod to support the motion expressing support for SEC members who felt under pressure.

The Rev Gennie Evans (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) expressed concern about the direction of travel in society regarding femininity but was more concerned that the motion might not be passed. We learn about the diversity of God by the diversity of people. She urged Synod to support the motion.

Dr Anne Martin (Edinburgh and Standing Committee member) noted as well as ensuring all people were welcome, she wished the SEC would become involved in support and discussion to find a way through the situation arising from the application and interpretation of the recent Supreme Court ruling. She was horrified at the polarisation into two extremes, for and against, the ruling and by the lack of common sense and consideration of those affected. Many people would need help and support and there was a need for dialogue.

The Venerable Dr Hayley Matthews (Archdeacon of Wrexham, Church in Wales) thanked Synod for its welcome. She quoted Isaiah 54. Recently the bishops of the Church in Wales had issued a statement that every human being was a precious child of God, deserving of dignity and respect. The bishops recognised that the struggle for trans people was often costly and difficult and therefore together they committed to pray all who were touched by the issue. They pray for greater compassion, understanding and generosity so that all children of God could find in the Church and in society a welcome and a place to be themselves. She hoped that Synod would join with the Church in Wales in providing that welcome to all of our siblings.

The Rev Bonnie Evans-Hills (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) spoke of her own experience of being a single parent and being embraced by a local church community in England who welcomed everyone from the community including transgender people. She wanted to emphasise the welcome she had received, as a vulnerable person, from the people who were now being attacked.

Canon Simon Mackenzie (Argyll and The Isles) agreed with all that had been said but felt that paragraph three had the effect of leaving us more binary than before. It should have stated 'should be accorded the dignity, respect and rights due to all people'.

The Rev Ollie Clegg (Edinburgh) asked that more time be given on this topic to take it back to dioceses and vestries to discuss. He felt it was being rushed through.

Mrs Elizabeth Roads (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) sympathised and supported the emotion behind this motion; however, she felt that as a motion it was exclusive and not inclusive, because it singled out one group of people as being more worthy of God's love rather than all people. She could not support this motion.

Dr Jaap Jacobs (Brechin) agreed with the motion but considered that the phrasing was not sufficient for purpose. The third clause should be 'accorded dignity and respect' and the word 'rights' suggested that the Church was disagreeing with the ruling of the Supreme Court. It did not address the anxiety caused by the Supreme Court ruling. As a Church we should not accept anxiety and provide as much comfort as possible to people who felt anxious about the ruling.

Dr Jacobs then proposed, and the Rev Peter Mead seconded, the following amendment to the motion:

Motion 17B – Amendment 2

"That this Synod affirm that transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming and inter-sex people:

1. are made in the image of God
2. are loved by God
3. should be accorded dignity and respect, and
4. should be able to participate fully in the life, worship, mission and ministry of the Scottish Episcopal Church."

Provost Holdsworth spoke against the amendment and noted that the Supreme Court ruling had been very clear that trans people retained rights as trans people. If the word 'rights' were removed then it could give the impression that trans people did not have rights.

Bishop Paton also opposed the amendment. He did not mind being called cis-gender or admitting that he was white, male and middle class. All those things put him in a privileged position in society. He was happy to be in a different group and to respect those in a smaller group and urged Synod to reject the amendment because we should own up to being who we are.

Ms Philip stated that the word 'cisgender' should be included. She had been attempting to name the sense of marginalisation by all trans people and to highlight how they were treated differently from their cisgender siblings.

Dr Jacobs acknowledged Ms Philp's point of view, but he preferred a perspective that did not single out specific groups however marginalised they may be. In his view, our aim was humanity, all children of God, and the wording of the motion should reflect that. In conjunction with the words 'dignity' and 'respect' that should be accorded, the rights have already been accorded by the court ruling and that was the reason for removing the word.

Amendment 17b was put to the vote as follows: 29 in favour, 73 against, 11 abstentions. The amendment failed.

Motion 17C – amendment 3

The Rev Amanda Fairclough (Argyll and The Isles) introduced Amendment 3. She was hopeful of an honest debate, but it must be deep, wide-ranging and open. It required time and a space that felt safe for everyone so that people could express their feelings without fear of being judged. She urged Synod, out of kindness, to allow everyone the time and space to conduct an honest debate well, in an appropriate setting.

Ms Fairclough then proposed, and the Very Rev Alison Simpson seconded, the following amendment to motion 17:

> "That the existing motion be replaced in its entirety with the following:
>
> > "This Synod affirms that all people are made and loved by God.
> >
> > "Synod also recognises the deep hurt caused by recent developments in sexual/gender politics.
> >
> > "That we might grow together in mutual understanding, Synod asks the College of Bishops to hold discussions in their Dioceses and bring back a comprehensive summary of views expressed to next year's General Synod.""

The Rev Andy Elliot (Aberdeen and Orkney) urged Synod to reject this amendment because ultimately the original motion was bland. The debate about how people are welcomed, how we protect people in single sex spaces, for example, these were things that did need to be debated by dioceses, but surely Synod could get behind a motion that was ultimately about how we love people.

Dr Routledge (ACC representative) urged Synod to vote against this amendment. She was from a charge that was proud to be open, inclusive and welcoming. To be welcoming we sometimes have to name those who are welcome. "All are welcome in this place" is not enough, we must single out specific groups. She did not have to question whether she was welcome as a cis-gender person. Trans+ siblings could not say the same. Synod did not need to give permission for people to continue to have conversations. She was concerned that, if accepted, this amendment would lead to a conversation process that would leave trans+ people battered and bruised and, possibly, excluded from conversations.

Dr Martin (Edinburgh and Standing Committee member) urged Synod to reject the amendment as a delay of a year was too long, but recognised further discussion should happen.

Dr Jacobs (Brechin) said this amendment asked the College of Bishops to do something, but it should be a diocesan decision with individual bishop's input. This could be discussed further at the extraordinary Diocesan Synods.

The Rev Fiona Bennett (United Reformed Church) shared the URC's experience. She had moderated the session which debated their resolution 21 which affirmed transgender identify. The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church affirmed the human dignity of transgender, non-gender and gender non-conforming people and asserted their right within and beyond the URC to live without threat, violence or hatred. It had been important for the URC to make that statement enabling them to declare to the world that their church was a safe place for transgender+ people.

Mr Hugh Morrison (Moray, Ross and Caithness) noted that there was general approval for the original motion but also a desire for further discussion in dioceses.

Ms Philip agreed that further discussion was needed, but also the explicit welcome for trans+ people was necessary to be part of that debate and to feel safe. It would be too late to leave discussion until the following year.

Motion 17c - amendment 3 was put to the vote as follows: 21 in favour, 87 against, 3 abstentions. The motion failed.

The Primus thanked Synod for the good debate and said that it was now time to put the motion to the vote. Whatever the outcome of the vote, he asked Synod members to take a moment of quiet reflection before moving on to the next business.

Motion 17 (as amended)

"This Synod affirms that transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming, and intersex people:

1. are made in the image of God,
2. are loved by God,
3. should be accorded the same dignity, respect and rights as cisgender people and
4. can and should participate fully in the life, worship, mission and ministry of the Scottish Episcopal Church."

Motion 17 (as amended) was put to the vote and passed as follows: 92 in favour, 12 against, 5 abstentions.

9.2 Standing Committee: Budgets and Quota

Ms Campbell (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and Mrs Whiteside seconded, the following motion:

"That this Synod, having examined the proposed budgets for the General Synod for the year 2026, agree to a quota figure of £785,000 for that year."

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 102 in favour, 4 against, 2 abstentions.

9.3 Elections

Standing Committee Convenership

Bishop Armes proposed, and Ms Campbell seconded, the following motion:

"That Ms Cathy Johnston be appointed as Convener of the Standing Committee."

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 104 in favour, none against, 1 abstention.

Mission Board Convenership

The Primus proposed, and the Rev Diana Hall seconded, the following motion:

"That the Rev Keith Thomasson be appointed as Convener of the Mission Board."

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 105 in favour, none against, 1 abstention.

Institute Council Convenership

The Primus proposed, and Ms Campbell seconded, the following motion:

"That the Rt Rev the Bishop of Brechin be appointed the Convener of the Institute Council."

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 101 in favour, 2 against, 4 abstentions.

Institute Council Membership

Bishop Swift proposed, and Ms Campbell seconded, the following motion:

"That the appointments by the Institute Council in 2024 of the Rev Canon Prof David Jasper and the Rev Dr Rebekah Sims as members of the Institute Council be ratified."

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 106 in favour, 1 against, 2 abstentions.

Buildings Committee Convenership

Mrs Whiteside proposed, and Ms Campbell seconded, the following motion:

"That Mr David Gibbon be appointed as Convener of the Buildings Committee."

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 100 in favour, none against, 2 abstentions.

Standing Committee: Co-opted appointments

Ms Campbell proposed an amendment to Motion 24. Boards and committees were generally made up of representatives from dioceses but sometimes they required more expertise within its membership. This motion would allow up to three non-voting members by co-option. The appointments would be for two years with a possibility of a second term of two years.

Synod's consent was sought to accept minor textual changes to the printed motion. The amendment 24A was passed on a show of hands.

Dr Martin Auld (Aberdeen and Orkney) proposed a rewording of motion 24 to alter the number of co-opted members to 15% of the elected membership of the Board or Committee. The proposal was not moved as there was no seconder.

The Rev Steven Cooper brought greetings from the Methodist Church in Scotland and commended this motion appreciating the way in which the Inter-Church Relations Committee included representation from other churches.

Ms Campbell then proposed, and Mrs Whiteside seconded, motion 24 as amended:

"That the following be added to the Digest of Resolutions under 2.1.4 (c) (iii): With majority agreement of its members a Board or Committee may appoint up to three non-voting co-opted members chosen for their expertise. The appointment of a non-voting co-opted member will be for two years with the possibility for a second term of two years."

The motion (as amended) was put to the vote and passed as follows: 104 in favour, 2 against, no abstentions.

Standing Committee: Preliminary Proceedings Committee

The next motion had been included in the envelopes given to Synod members on their arrival. Ms Campbell proposed, and the Primus seconded, the following motion:

> "That Ms Fiona Muirs be appointed as a practising lawyer to the Preliminary Proceedings Committee for the remainder of a five-year term to 2029."

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 100 in favour, none against, 3 abstentions.

9.4 Thanks from the Primus

The Primus expressed thanks to the ecumenical guests and their buddies, those who acted as table facilitators, to the Rev Canon Dean Fostekew who had co-ordinated the table groups, to those who had acted as Chairs and to Mr Gavin McEwan, the Assessor. He thanked those who had led or arranged the Eucharist and morning and evening prayer, including the Rev Rosie Addis and Miriam Weibye.

The Primus thanked those Conveners who were stepping down from their roles: Bonnie Evans-Hills (Interfaith Relations Committee), Nicholas Taylor (Liturgy Committee), Saray Murray (Mission Board), Peter Sharp (Buildings Committee) and Bridget Campbell (Standing Committee).

He thanked Mark Kisby of AV Dept and Neil MacLennan of Sanctus Media for providing the IT systems; as well as Thea Macdonald and her team and the IT support staff of St Paul's and St George's.

The Primus thanked Bishop John Armes who was due to retire at the end of August 2025. He also thanked Jean Fenwick from Brechin as this was her last Synod having served for many years. The Secretary General, Donna Glass and the General Synod Office staff were also thanked.

9.5 Closing Worship and Acts of Synod

The Primus confirmed the Acts of Synod and after a closing hymn, closed Synod with the blessing.

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH HELD ONLINE ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

Opening Eucharist

The Synod was constituted at a celebration of the Eucharist at St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh at 7.00pm on Tuesday 9 September 2025.

The Most Rev Mark Strange, Primus, delivered his charge to the Synod after the Eucharist, noting that he had been looking in his own study recently, having just moved it from one place to another, and realised that he had a whole series of Prayer Books.

The books ranged from one that was written about the time of young Edward, King of England through to Cranmer's revisions, the revisions attempted in 1928, what the Church did in 1929, and then a move on from there. Everything kept changing and yet every one of those books was the Prayer Book.

Each one had been gently amended as time had gone by because things changed. Double Lord's Prayers in Evening Prayer, and all sorts of other odd things which had been there and changed and moved. Whenever he celebrated a particular communion service from the Scottish Prayer Book, according to the rubrics, there was always somebody who would say, "that's not the way we do it", because people were, by nature, creatures who liked the things that they liked and sometimes struggled with change. That was why this meeting might, for some people, raise the question: "do we really have to sit in our living rooms and go through this process? Can we not just let someone say it's okay?".

The answer was 'no, we can't'. If changes were to be made to the fundamental way the Church elected its bishops, then the voice of the whole Church, the General Synod, needed to be involved.

The amendments to the Prayer Book had understandably taken time to review. While initial confidence in the revisions was high, subsequent changes had proven necessary. Fortunately, the adjustments that had been identified in Canon 4 had emerged more quickly than in past instances. If tonight's discussions helped to clarify and to implement the required updates, it will have been a meaningful step forward - both for the Diocese of Edinburgh, as it begins its search for a bishop, and for the wider Episcopal Church.

SESSION 1: THE MOST REV THE PRIMUS IN THE CHAIR

1.1 Preliminary Business

1.1.1 Welcome

The Primus welcomed everyone to the Synod meeting.

There was an announcement regarding Zoom etiquette followed by a short training session on the voting system.

1.1.2 Preliminary Business

Appointment of Tellers

Ms Cathy Johnston (Standing Committee Convener) proposed, and Mrs Jan Whiteside (Standing Committee member) seconded, the following motion:

> "That James Lloyd, Miriam Weibye and Neil MacLennan be appointed as tellers for the meeting."

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 87 in favour, none against, 1 abstention.

Appointment of Prolocutors

The Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth (Standing Committee member) proposed, and the Rev Diana Hall (Standing Committee member) seconded, the following motion:

> "That the Very Rev Margaret Campbell be appointed as Clerical Prolocutor for the meeting."

The motion was put to the vote in the House of Clergy and passed as follows: 44 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

Provost Holdsworth then proposed, and Ms Hall seconded, the following motion:

> "That the Very Rev Roxanne Campbell be appointed as Clerical Vice-Prolocutor for the meeting."

The motion was put to the vote in the House of Clergy and passed as follows: 46 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

Ms Johnston proposed, and Mrs Whiteside seconded, the following motion:

> "That Dr Nicola Mills be appointed as Lay Prolocutor for the meeting."

The motion was put to the vote in the House of Laity and passed as follows: 42 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

Ms Johnston then proposed, and Mrs Whiteside seconded, the following motion:

> "That Ms Jenny Whelan be appointed as Lay Vice-Prolocutor for the meeting."

The motion was put to the vote in the House of Laity and passed as follows: 43 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

Permission to Speak

The Rt Rev David Railton (Bishop of Argyll and The Isles) proposed, and Dr Anne Martin seconded, the following motion:

> "That Dr Samuel White, Convener of the Committee on Canons, Neil MacLennan of Sanctus Media and provincial staff members be given permission to speak to Synod."

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 95 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

1.1.3 Minutes of General Synod 2025

The minutes of the June 2025 meeting of the General Synod were noted and approval would be sought at the General Synod meeting in June 2026.

1.1.4 Roll Call

The roll call of Synod members was taken from the digital systems. A total of 96 members attended.

2. Faith and Order Board: Committee on Canons

2.1 Canon for Second Reading: Canon 4 Of the Calling and Election of Bishops to Vacant Sees

Dr Samuel White (Convener, Committee on Canons) introduced the Canon for second reading. He noted that, as he had mentioned during the June Synod, there were three broad areas where the Committee sought to make changes.

The changes were aimed at ensuring, first of all, that the episcopal electoral process was as efficient and as effective as possible. In other words, it was to ensure that, wherever possible, the Electoral Synod itself produced the result. An additional change was to ensure that where there was a period of mourning, for example, or another reason to slow the electoral process, the Canons provided the flexibility to do so.

He thanked the Diocesan Synods for having considered this so quickly since the last General Synod meeting in June. The opinions provided were evidence of swift meetings characterised by thoughtful consideration and useful suggestions for the text of the Canon. It showed the strength of the Church's approach to synodical decision-making that the result of this back-and-forth was a clearer process, marked by greater transparency, which he hoped would be more effective as a result.

His note included in the Synod papers laid out the changes being proposed which were not different in any meaningful way from the outline he gave in June. By way of a reminder, he noted the Committee sought to make major changes to Section 5 on the issuing of the mandate and Section 26 on the voting process. The main changes since Synod members had seen the text in June, which reflected suggestions from Diocesan Synods had been accepted by the Committee, and were as follows:

- Section 5(b) would now include a time limit on the extension of the mandate. The mandate would normally be issued within 21 days, but in very exceptional circumstances the College of Bishops were able to extend that time for a period not normally exceeding six months, allowing, for example, a period of mourning (or other good reason) to delay issuing the mandate. That was to create a respectful period where necessary, to manage any issue that necessitated slowing the process, and it also ensured the process would not fail due to a time bar.

- In respect of Section 26, the key changes, compared with what had been presented in June, were in Sections 26(b) and 26(h). Section 26(b) was now clearer about including the voting option of "None" in the process. It would now be explicit that it must be included on the ballot paper so there would be no question that that option was open to voting members of an Episcopal Electoral Synod. Section 26(h) also changed towards its previous form to make clear how the voting process worked as clearly and succinctly as possible, so that anyone reading the Canon could see clearly how the single transferable vote would work.

- The other main change arising out of the consultation with Diocesan Synods was to definitions, specifically the definition of "majority." There was now a clear definition at the outset of the Canon to allow for majorities where there were more than two candidates, and where there were only two candidates. The terms "absolute" and "simple" majority had previously been used; that language was now contained within the definition of "majority," and the word "majority" was used throughout the Canon.

All these changes, together with those previously discussed and outlined in his notes, were designed to ensure the process ran as efficiently as possible. He hoped this change in process was clear, made sense, and would give rise to more efficient and effective episcopal elections.

He commended this draft of the Canon to Synod members.

The Primus announced that a further amendment had been received, proposed by Dr Beth Routledge, and seconded by the Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth, as follows:

> "These proposed amendments relate to the text of Canon 4 as amended by the proposals from the Diocese of Moray, Ross, and Caithness (pages 2 and 3 in the papers). We propose that:

(1) That the Section 1 Definitions should read:
"majority" means, where the context so provides in this Canon, an absolute majority ~~in the case of more than two Candidates~~ *of all those members of Electoral Synod, recorded as present and admitted, in terms of Section 22 of this Canon, and voting*~~, or a simple majority by way of first past the post in the case of two Candidates~~

(2) That Section 25(g) should read:
In the event of no Candidate receiving *an absolute* majority the Convener shall call upon the meeting, following any further discussion which the Convener may decide to allow, to vote for a second time upon the list

(3) That Section 27(a) should read:
If voting has taken place under Section 25, and, where appropriate, under Section 26, and neither Candidate has obtained *an absolute* majority in both houses, the Convener may call upon the Electoral Synod to adjourn

(4) That Section 27(g) should read:
If at the end of this process no Candidate has *an absolute* majority in both houses the Convener shall declare the Electoral Process unsuccessful".

Dr Routledge explained that if the Synod removed the term "absolute majority" from the text, as was suggested by the Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness and accepted by Dr White, there were a number of clauses within the process as proposed which could result in a bishop being elected even where a majority of members in one or both Houses had abstained. Their proposal to reinstate the term "absolute majority" was simply to make it clear that the process required a majority of members who were present and voting.

In the previous version of Canon 4, before it was amended in 2023, the term "absolute majority" did not appear, and this was because the language about "a majority of members of Electoral Synod recorded as present and admitted in terms of Section 22 and voting" was present every time a vote was referred to. This appeared seven or eight times through the text of the Canon as amended in 2023. By removing this language to streamline things, the term "absolute majority" was needed to ensure that bishops were elected with the confidence of an absolute majority of those voting, rather than allowing for a majority of the Synod to abstain from the vote.

Provost Holdsworth reinforced that the point of Canon 4 was not to elect bishops, it was to elect bishops who had the confidence of the Synod. He said that it was important not to end up in a situation where a bishop could be elected despite most members of the Synod in one of the Houses, having not voted for them. It was not difficult to imagine how impossible it could become for someone to exercise an episcopal ministry if everyone knew all along that they had not been able to command a majority in both Houses of the Electoral Synod. His own feeling was that this was very important, and without it he would not be able to support the main motion.

After considering the new proposed amendments, Dr White confirmed that he was happy to accept them. The amendments now formed part of the Canon which Synod members would be asked to vote on.

Dr White clarified, when queried, that the amendment proposed by Dr Routledge and Provost Holdsworth would remove the issue that if the majority had voted "None," that would still carry.

The Primus then proposed, and Ms Johnston seconded, the following motion:

"That the amended text of Canon 4 be read for the second time."

The motion was then put to the vote in houses and the outcome of the vote was as follows:

House of Bishops: 6 in favour, none against, no abstentions
House of Clergy: 45 in favour, none against, no abstentions
House of Laity: 41 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention.

The motion was passed.

2.2 Promulgation of Alterations to Code of Canons

Section 18 of Canon 52 stated that where any alteration has been proposed and confirmed in accordance with Section 17 of this Canon it shall come into effect forty days from the end of the meeting at which it was enacted unless the General Synod at that meeting directs otherwise.

The Primus explained that in order that the episcopal vacancy in the Diocese of Edinburgh be covered by the amended Canon 4, it was required that the alteration be promulgated before he issued the Mandate for the Election of a Bishop.

The Primus therefore proposed, and the Rt Rev Andrew Swift (Bishop of Brechin) seconded, the following motion:

> "That this Synod directs that the amended Canon 4 should have effect as of Tuesday the 16th day of September 2025."

The motion was then put to the vote and passed: 95 in favour, none against, 1 abstention.

2.3 Date of Next Meeting

The Secretary General confirmed that the provisional dates for the next General Synod were 11-13 June 2026. She acknowledged that some Synod members preferred to book their accommodation for Synod well in advance. However, she asked Synod members to delay making any bookings because discussions were underway about where Synod might be held in the coming year. Synod members would be informed of the 2026 venue as soon as possible.

2.4 Thanks from the Primus and Acts of Synod

The Primus expressed thanks to Synod members for attending online and was grateful that due process had been undertaken. He then confirmed the Acts of Synod following a short service of Night Prayer and closed the Synod meeting with the blessing.

The Provincial Strategy (2026–2033): Overview

The Scottish Episcopal Church is living in a time of change. Across Scotland, dioceses and charges are responding to real pressures: sustaining ministry, caring for buildings, attracting volunteers, and serving communities whose needs are shifting.

The Provincial Strategy is intended to help the Province use its resources, both human and financial, to support dioceses and charges in this context. It is enabling rather than prescriptive and sits alongside, not above, dioceses and charges. In short, the Strategy exists to help the Province play its proper role: enabling, resourcing and sustaining the mission and ministry that happens locally.

How the Strategy was shaped

The Provincial Strategy is the result of sustained listening, reflection and discussion across the Church. Work began in early 2025 with facilitated sessions involving the College of Bishops, Standing Committee and members of the General Synod Office. This was followed by wider engagement with provincial bodies and vestries, as well as discussion at General Synod 2025. Through this process, several themes emerged consistently, including the need to support and develop clergy and lay leadership, a desire to engage and empower younger people, the importance of local churches as centres of community connection, and the challenge of sustaining ministry, buildings and volunteers.

What the Strategy is (and what it is not)

The Provincial Strategy provides guidance over the period 2026–2033 to inform the allocation of provincial resources, while leaving space for local variation and theological breadth.

It is not a detailed action plan for charges or dioceses, nor does it replace local discernment, diocesan responsibility or Synodical decision-making. Rather, it offers a clear reference point for provincial decisions, particularly where resources are limited and careful choices are required.

The Strategy is a high-level statement of priorities. More detailed planning will follow, allowing practical arrangements to respond flexibly to changing circumstances while the overall direction remains consistent.

Conclusion

Used well, the Provincial Strategy provides a framework through which the Province can make clear and consistent decisions about the use of its shared resources, in support of the Church’s common life and work.

Synod members will be invited in their table groups to consider what the Strategy might mean for them in their local contexts.

Cathy Johnston
Standing Committee Convener

Scottish Episcopal Church
Provincial Strategy 2026 – 2033

Preface from the College of Bishops

At the heart of the Christian story is God's promise to make all things new—a hope rooted in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and alive in every age. As the Scottish Episcopal Church looks ahead, we trust that God's Spirit is at work among us, calling us to share in Christ's mission. Our purpose is not self-serving, but to reveal God's Kingdom, make Christ's love known, and be a sign of hope. Across Scotland, every church bears the message 'The Scottish Episcopal Church Welcomes You.' That simple phrase expresses both who we are and who we aspire to be: a community open to all, rooted in Christ's love, grounded in the gospel, and sustained by the Church's enduring tradition.

Why a Provincial Strategy?

As a national Church present in villages, towns, and cities, we carry the richness and variety of our heritage into daily life. There is much joy and creativity and signs of renewal—but also significant challenges as a 21st-century church. This strategy has emerged from consultation with vestries, diocesan voices, and provincial bodies—and, above all, we pray, through listening to the Holy Spirit. It is not a top-down blueprint, but a shared vision for celebrating our joys and addressing our challenges.

Our Vision for Church Communities

Through discernment, a clear vision has emerged: to be a Church that is open and generous in welcome; confident in worship and faithful in witness; rooted in the gospel and responsive to the needs of our time. We are called to deepen discipleship, grow in diversity and leadership, act with integrity for justice and peace, and steward our resources—people, buildings, money, and time—with care and purpose. These are not just organisational goals, but expressions of our baptismal calling—to embody the joy of Christ's presence while engaging with the realities we face.

Achieving the Vision

To realise these priorities, the General Synod will commit resources to enable change and growth. Investment will support leadership development, youth and community engagement, new and revitalised congregations, and improved communication to confidently share our identity as a Christian Church in Scotland and beyond. Governance structures will be aligned to offer support; research will help measure the strategy's impact, and partnership-working will help extend our reach. These enablers will bring real, tangible benefits to charges, dioceses and the Province.

Rooted in Faith and Prayer

Changes in governance, finance, or communication are not ends in themselves. They are gifts entrusted to the Church by God, for the sake of the gospel. The true power of this strategy lies in prayer—in our congregations, homes, and eucharistic life—where we are renewed by Christ's grace.

The College of Bishops commends this strategy to the whole Church with hope and gratitude: hope, because we believe God is doing a new thing among us; gratitude, for the wisdom, energy, and imagination offered by so many. Our prayer is that these priorities will help us share the journey of joys and challenges in faith, confident that the One who began a good work among us will bring it to completion.

Strategic Priorities 2026 - 2033

The General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church ('the Province') seeks to target its resources to empower, support and enable the Church at diocesan and local levels. Dioceses and charges are invited to consider their own priorities in the light of those set out below.

Three Priorities

We are a learning Church

Vision: Our leaders grow and develop throughout their ministry; and learning and discipleship are central to the life of the Church—across all ages, roles, and contexts.

Objectives:

- Clergy and lay leaders are supported through a high-quality programme of continuing ministerial development.
- Congregations have the resources they need to learn and grow in faith.

We are a diverse Church

Vision: We are intergenerational and open and generous in welcome, embracing diversity in people, vocational pathways and expressions of worship.

Objectives:

- More younger people are involved in all aspects of church life, with coordinated national support enhancing engagement.
- Pathways to ministry are flexible with multiple routes.
- Worship is participatory and open to all, and there are a variety of expressions of worship across the Church.

We are a visible and growing church

Vision: We are a voice for justice and peace locally, nationally, environmentally and globally and are an unmistakable presence in the life of our communities, where we are growing in faith and in numbers.

Objectives:

- Improved communications enhance visibility and advocacy.
- New congregations flourish and existing ones are revitalised.
- Worship and community spaces are fit for purpose and sustainable.

Four enablers

To deliver this strategy we will…

- Simplify and align our **governance** structures
- Be bold in using our human and financial **resources**
- Engage in **research and evaluation** to understand who we are, what we do and how well we do it
- Work in **partnership** with other denominations and third sector organisations

CONDUCT/DISCIPLINE OVERVIEW

Policies and canons in development, to help us live, work and minister well together:

Code of Conduct – policy which underpins the canons and policies in this work, draft for discussion by General Synod. This policy sets expectation for appropriate conduct and defines misconduct and gross misconduct.

Bullying and Harassment Policy – revised policy not yet laid before General Synod**.** This policy outlines in further detail an important element of conduct and misconduct.

Complaint Procedure – discussion questions laid before General Synod. This procedure is intended to resolve a range of situations including misunderstandings, errors, and conflicts.

In many situations, the above policies will be used as resources to resolve a situation and to provide suitable closure and better understanding of how best to relate well with each other.

In some situations, escalation to a process prescribed by Canon may be required. To help the Church navigate this consistently and fairly, these Canons are currently being revised or drafted:

Canon 53 - Committee on Canons will propose repealing Canon 53 and replacing with Canon 67 (pastoral breakdown) and Canon 68 (clergy raising a grievance)

Canon 54 (clergy discipline) – draft for discussion by General Synod

Canon 64 (clergy incapacity) – review in progress, including specialist advice, not yet laid before General Synod

Canon 67 (pastoral breakdown) – drafting in progress, including testing with affected groups including clergy, not yet laid before General Synod

Canon 68 (clergy raising grievance) – drafting in progress, not yet laid before General Synod

Canon 69 (confidentiality) – a new canon, draft for discussion by General Synod

As resources to aid implementation of the canons listed above, these policies are in development:

- Incapacity Policy
- Suspension Policy
- Grievance Procedure

The Committee on Canons are working on drafts of the Canons as listed above, and the Administration Board are working on drafts of the policies and procedures.

CANON 54 DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

Written by staff and advisers on the instruction of the Faith & Order Board

The document supplied to General Synod is a draft for <u>discussion</u> and is not laid before General Synod for First Reading.

1. There has been a great deal of work during recent years to review the canons and policies relating to conduct and discipline within the Scottish Episcopal Church. A Canonical Review Group compiled a set of recommendations in 2021 relating to Canons 53, 54, 64, 65 and related policies.

2. In December 2024, the Committee on Canons considered a revised draft of Canon 54 along with other Canons and identified further work to be carried out.

3. During 2025 and early 2026, the Convener of the Committee on Canons and staff and advisers gathered insights from other provinces and commissioned engagement with Bishops, Deans and others in the Church to identify best practice and learning relating to clergy discipline and other matters.

4. Since the beginning of January 2026, the Committee on Canons have carried out intensive and extensive work to consider carefully the insights gathered and to test the processes required for Canon 54 to:

   (a) Operate only in situations of gross misconduct, with clear and accessible routes for resolving conflict or misconduct prior to escalation where possible;

   (b) Operate at an appropriate pace, with sufficient time for careful consideration of complaints while avoiding delay and the distress and disruption that such delay can cause; and

   (c) Operate with credibility and rigour, minimising actual or perceived conflicts of interest and introducing external professional expertise where necessary.

5. Revision of Canon 54 remains in progress, and a working draft is laid before General Synod for discussion and input prior to further work by the Committee on Canons. This further work will include commissioning testing directly with clergy, along with parallel work on pastoral breakdown and clergy incapacity, recognising the impact that such processes might have on a cleric's livelihood and home.

6. In addition, the Faith & Order Board have requested a wider process of stress-testing involving members of various provincial committees and others, using scenarios based on practical examples in order to rehearse the processes of clergy discipline, pastoral breakdown, grievance, suspension, and clergy incapacity and to identify their interdependencies. This is due to take place later in 2026.

Proposed revisions to Canon 54

7. Some of the major revisions introduced during the drafting process include but are not limited to:

   (i) Changing the language of the canon to be consistent with civil justice rather than criminal proceedings, recognising that this process might be considered to be equivalent to one in other sectors which addresses professional misconduct;

   (ii) Introducing "balance of probabilities" as burden of proof;

   (iii) Prioritising electronic communication over hard copy, while recognising that lack of access or capacity to communicate electronically must not be a bar to participation;

   (iv) Replacing "conduct unbecoming" with language which is less ambiguous or patriarchal, and noting that definitions of misconduct and gross misconduct should be described at policy level where more detail can be expressed[1];

   (v) Retaining an initial triage stage while replacing the Preliminary Proceedings Committee (PPC) with a pool of trained professional investigators/ assessors, of whom one is allocated an incoming complaint to verify whether it meets the criteria for passing to the Procurator;

   (vi) Introducing an expedited process for addressing a situation where a cleric is convicted of a criminal offence;

   (vii) Retaining a tribunal process which includes a cleric of the same order as the respondent, consistent with our ecclesiology, with new powers for the College of Bishops to appoint a bishop from another province or a retired bishop with permission to officiate where a bishop is the respondent;

   (viii) Introducing powers to deem a complaint vexatious, with stated criteria and stages of the process for so deeming;

   (ix) Providing for the respondent (the cleric who is the subject of a complaint) to receive legal representation;

   (x) Clarifying grounds for appeal and composition of appeal panel; and

[1] This is outlined in the Code of Conduct, which is laid before General Synod for discussion during June 2026. Among the reasons for outlining this level of detail at policy level rather than in a Canon is the need to design Canons which can remain in place for some time without revision. Policies can more comfortably include information which is time-specific, such as references to legislation or statutory guidance among other things, as revisions to such policy can be approved in one sitting of General Synod while canonical revisions require a First Reading and a Second Reading with engagement with diocesan synods prior to Second Reading.

(xi) Noting that resignation of a cleric following instigation of Canon 54 does not preclude due consideration of the complaint or, where appropriate, consequence.

Formatting

8. The draft supplied is a **work in progress** and will return to the Committee on Canons following comment from General Synod. In the meantime, General Synod should note that:

   (a) Where text in red is an incomplete reference to another section of the document, this is because the document is not fully drafted and so internal references may shift as sections are revised; and

   (b) The section on Suspension is not yet populated because work to develop a suspension policy which takes account of various situations including but not limited to a Canon 54 complaint is in progress.

General Synod June 2026

9. During the June 2026 sessions, General Synod shall be provided with discussion questions and invited to comment on the draft Canon 54.

DRAFT CANON FIFTY-FOUR OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE OF CLERGY

PART I – CONDUCT AND COMPLAINTS

1. DEFINITIONS in this Canon

- "Appeals Panel" means those members of the Tribunal appointed to hear an appeal under the Tribunal's appellate jurisdiction;
- "the complainer" means a person who makes a complaint in accordance with Section 4 of this Canon;
- "the Church" means the Scottish Episcopal Church;
- "clerical adviser" means a person identified by the Secretary General as having relevant and sufficient knowledge and understanding of the Church to enable them to provide advice to the Investigator in terms of Section 12(h) of this Canon.
- "clerk in holy orders" means any person licensed with an ordained ministry within the SEC or who was so licensed at the time of the event or events forming the subject matter of a complaint.
- "communicant lay member of the Church" means a person who had declared themselves to be a communicant lay member of the Church and whose status as such has been confirmed by the priest in charge where that person worships and receives Holy Communion;
- "complaint" means a complaint brought in terms of Section 4 of this Canon;
- "conviction" means any unspent criminal conviction;
- "document" or "documents" include any electronic communications**;**
- "Hearing Panel" means those members of the Tribunal appointed to hear and determine complaints under Section ? of this Canon referred to it.
- "Investigator" means a person chosen under Section 11 of this Canon to investigate a complaint.
- "the Investigatory Panel" means the panel of persons appointed under Section ? of this Canon;
- "Notice of Hearing" means the Notice of Hearing referred to in Section ?? of this Canon;
- "misconduct" means behaviour or conduct specified in Section 3 of this Canon;

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- "party" means the Procurator or any respondent as the context requires and "parties" shall be construed accordingly;
- "practising lawyer" means a lawyer who (i) holds a practising certificate from the Law Society of Scotland or (ii) is a practising member of the Faculty of Advocates or (iii) holds a position as a fee paid or permanent member of a tribunal or the judiciary and has previously held a practising certificate from the Law Society of Scotland or has been a practising member of the Faculty of Advocates;
- "the President of the Tribunal" means the member of the Tribunal so nominated under Section ? of this Canon;
- "the Procurator" means the person appointed under Section ? of this Canon;
- "the Provincial Safeguarding Officer" means the person appointed under Canon 65 and "ACPO" means the Acting Provincial Safeguarding Officer appointed under said Canon;
- "Rules" means the Rules of the Tribunal referred to in Section ?? of this Canon;
- "respondent" means a person against whom a complaint has been made in accordance with Section 4 of this Canon;
- "safeguarding matters" means those matters referred to in Canon 65;
- "safeguarding policies" means the safeguarding policies approved by the Church's General Synod for the purposes of Canon 65.
- "Second Investigator" means a person appointed under Section 13 of this Canon to review a decision that no further action should be taken in respect of a complaint;
- "the Secretary" means the Secretary of the Investigatory Panel appointed under Section 9 of this Canon;
- "sentencing hearing" means a hearing falling on the date on which a verdict has been pronounced or on a date falling thereafter at which the Hearing Panel will be entitled to receive submissions from the parties and pronounce sentence in respect of said verdict;
- "spiritual abuse" means action taken under the guise of religion to control and dominate a person, including harassment, humiliation, abuse of a clerical position and denial or use of spiritual or religious beliefs and practices;
- "the Standing Committee" means the Standing Committee of the Church appointed by the General Synod under Canon 52, Section 23;
- "Suspension" means the process referred to in Section 7 of this Canon;
- "the Tribunal" means The Clergy Discipline Tribunal of the Church as established under Section ? of this Canon; and

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- "verdict" means the decision pronounced by the Tribunal in terms of Section ? of this Canon.

2. SERVICE OF NOTICES, CORRESPONDENCE AND DOCUMENTS

Any notice, correspondence or other document which requires to be sent to any person under this Canon shall be sent by email (together with an electronic delivery receipt request) to an email address provided for that purpose by the person or, where no email address has been provided or where the person has requested service by post, by postal service which provides for the delivery or receipt of the notice to be recorded.

3. MISCONDUCT

Misconduct means any act or omission or series of acts or omissions by a clerk in holy orders, in their clerical or personal life, which falls significantly short of the standards of behaviour which the Church might reasonably expect of them, including those standards prescribed by the Church in policies and codes of conduct from time to time. It includes, but shall not be limited to:

(i) behaviour or conduct which is the subject of a conviction,
(ii) bullying, abuse of power or failure to observe professional boundaries,
(iii) spiritual abuse,
(iv) sexual misconduct,
(v) breach of the Church's safeguarding policies,
(vi) knowing violation of the Code of Canons or of anything lawfully ordered thereunder,
(vii) failure to respect Episcopal authority, and
(viii) failure to (i) disclose arrests, criminal charges and/or convictions or (ii) refer convictions to the Procurator, as required by Section 6 of this Canon.

4. ENTITLEMENT TO COMPLAIN

(a) Any one or more of the following may make a complaint:
(i) a diocesan bishop of the Church,
(ii) the Provincial Safeguarding Officer or any Assistant Provincial Safeguarding Officer appointed under Canon 65, and

(iii) any person who has been directly affected by the alleged misconduct or has been a direct witness to the alleged misconduct.

(b) A complaint against a clerk in holy orders alleging that misconduct has been committed by that person shall be in the form prescribed in Section 5 of this Canon.

(c) Where the complaint concerns an allegation of misconduct that has directly affected an individual, but the individual cannot bring the complaint because they lack legal capacity to do so, the complaint may be brought on the individual's behalf by their parent, guardian or attorney as the case may be.

5. INITIATION AND FORM OF COMPLAINT

(a) A complaint shall be lodged with the Secretary to the Investigatory Panel in writing.

(b) The complaint shall set out (using Form A of Appendix No.24 or otherwise) the following detail:

(i) a description of the alleged misconduct, which, in the case of an offence under Section 3(viii) of this Canon, shall include reference to the Canon and Section thereof allegedly contravened;

(ii) the name of the respondent, together with such other information concerning the identity of the respondent (e.g. address, appointment held, churches served) as is known to the complainer;

(iii) the date or dates of the alleged misconduct, and the place or places where it took place, where known; and

(iv) the basis of the complainer's knowledge of the alleged misconduct, or, where the facts thereof are not within the personal knowledge of the complainer, the grounds on which the complainer believes the alleged misconduct to have taken place.

(c) The complaint shall also include the signature of the complainer, the date of that signature and the full name, address and, where applicable, the telephone number and email address of the complainer.

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(d) Where a complaint concerns more than one respondent, the complainer shall set out the details listed above in relation to each respondent using a separate Form A for each respondent.

(e) A complaint (other than a complaint of misconduct in respect of safeguarding matters) must be made within twelve months of the alleged misconduct having taken place.

6. CRIMINAL CHARGES AND CONVICTIONS

(a) Where a clerk in holy orders is (i) arrested; (ii) charged with a criminal offence; or (iii) convicted of a criminal offence they must within seven days disclose that fact and explain the nature of the offence for which they have been arrested, charged or convicted.

(b) Disclosure must be made (i) in the case of a clerk in holy orders who is not a Bishop to the clerk's Bishop (or, in the Bishop's absence, to a person nominated by the Bishop to receive such disclosure); (ii) in the case of a Bishop to the Primus; and (iii) in the case of the Primus to the Senior Bishop.

(c) Where a clerk in holy orders has disclosed that they have been arrested or charged with a criminal offence then Section 7 of this Canon (Suspension from Office) shall apply as though the clerk has been the subject of a complaint and the Bishop, Primus or Senior Bishop, as the case may be, shall decide whether the clerk should be suspended from office pending the outcome of the criminal process.

(d) Where a clerk in holy orders has disclosed that they have been convicted of a criminal offence then Section 7 of this Canon (Suspension from Office) shall apply as though the clerk has been the subject of a complaint and the Bishop, Primus or Senior Bishop, as the case may be, shall decide whether the clerk should be suspended from office pending the Procurator's decision under Section 23 of this Canon.

(e) Where a clerk in holy orders has disclosed that they have been convicted of a criminal offence then the Bishop, Primus or Senior Bishop, as the case may be, shall within seven days report that disclosure to the Procurator who shall then proceed in accordance with Section 23 of this Canon.

7. SUSPENSION FROM OFFICE

[To be confirmed]

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

All documents and proceedings arising under this Canon shall be subject to a duty of confidentiality such that they shall be treated as strictly confidential by all persons involved in all or any of the proceedings arising under the Canon who are subject to the Canons of the Church. Any knowing breach of this duty by a cleric shall constitute a knowing violation of the Canons of the Church. Any knowing breach of this duty by a lay person shall entitle the Bishop to disqualify that lay person from holding office within the Congregation or the diocese for a period not exceeding five years. The Bishop may also recommend to the Convenor of the Provincial Standing Committee that any lay person also be disqualified from holding any provincial appointment.

8A. VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

(a) The Secretary, Investigator, Procurator or Tribunal may decline to accept, investigate, prosecute or hear trials or appeals in connection with (as the case may be) a vexatious complaint.

(b) A vexatious complaint is a complaint in respect of which the complainer behaves in a way that prevents the Secretary, Investigator, Procurator or Tribunal (as the case may be) from discharging their duties under this Canon or creates a material obstacle to them doing so.

(c) Examples of such behaviour include but are not limited to:

(i) Repeated and persistent use of threatening or offensive language (including discriminatory language).
(ii) Repeated and persistent contact with the Secretary, Investigator, Procurator or Tribunal (as the case may be) where the complainer has been asked to refrain from such contact.
(iii) Refusal to cooperate with the processes prescribed by this Canon.
(iv) Repeated complaints about the same matter.
(v) Inconsistent behaviour including materially changing the nature of the complaint, or the complainer's account of the factual basis for it, part-way through the complaints process.

(d) Before making a decision under subparagraph (a) of this Section, the Secretary, Investigator, Procurator or Tribunal (as the case may be) must notify the complainer that they are considering making such a decision and explain to the complainer their reasons for doing so. The complainer shall have a period of 7 days after the giving of such a notice in which to make representations as to why the complaint should not be treated as vexatious and no decision shall be made under subparagraph (a) before the expiry of that 7 day period. The Secretary, Investigator, Procurator or Tribunal shall have regard to any such representations as are made.

PART II – SECRETARY AND INVESTIGATORY PANEL

9. SECRETARY TO INVESTIGATORY PANEL

(a) The Standing Committee shall appoint a Secretary to the Investigatory Committee who shall be (a) a practising lawyer or (b) a practising solicitor in England, Wales or Northern Ireland or (c) a barrister practising in the courts of England and Wales or Northern Ireland.

(b) The Secretary shall be appointed for a five-year term (which term may be renewed for a further such term or terms).

(c) The Secretary may obtain administrative and other support (including legal advice) in the discharge of their functions under this Canon.

10. ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINT BY SECRETARY

(a) On receipt of a complaint the Secretary shall:

(i) notify the respondent that the complaint has been received and shall be assessed; and

(ii) assess the complaint to determine whether it should be accepted and referred to an investigator.

(b) The notice given to the respondent by the Secretary shall:

(i) explain that the respondent shall be entitled to seek legal advice and be legally represented in relation to any investigatory process, pre-trial procedure, trial or appeal under this Canon; and

(ii) provide details of the advice and support (including financial support) which may be available to the respondent.

(c) A complaint shall **not** be accepted and referred to an investigator if:

(i) it is a complaint (other than a complaint of misconduct in respect of safeguarding matters) that has been made outwith the twelve month period specified in Section 5 of this Canon; and/or

(ii) it has been made by a person other than those specified in Section 4 of this Canon as being entitled to make a complaint; and/or

(iii) the complaint is materially the same as a complaint that has already been considered in terms of this Canon; and/or

(iv) the complaint is premature.

(d) Where the Secretary determines that the complaint is not accepted they shall notify the complainer and the respondent of that determination and their reasons for it.

(e) Where the Secretary determines that the complaint is accepted they shall notify the complainer and the respondent of that determination and shall refer the complaint to a single Investigator chosen by the Secretary from the Investigatory Panel established under Section 11 of this Canon. The Investigator chosen by the Secretary shall not have any close personal or professional connection with the complainer or the respondent.

(f) Where the Secretary assesses and accepts a complaint or complaints about more than one cleric, they may refer those complaints for investigation by the same Investigator where the Secretary considers that the circumstances make it appropriate to do so.

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11. INVESTIGATORY PANEL

(a) The Standing Committee shall appoint, on the recommendation of the Secretary (who shall from time to time undertake a recruitment process for this purpose), a panel of persons to act as investigators of complaints made under this Canon.

(b) The Standing Committee shall ensure that, at all times, the Investigatory Panel comprises not less than six Investigators.

(c) The Secretary shall recommend for appointment to the Investigatory Panel persons who are:

(i) not employed by, or hold office in, the Church or any part of the Church,
(ii) suitably experienced in the investigation of complaints relating to conduct,
(iii) familiar with the requirements of this Canon and the Church's policies on conduct, and
(iv) in sympathy with the aims of the Church (which requirement may be capable of being fulfilled by a person who holds any faith or none).

(d) Investigators shall be appointed for five years and appointment may be renewed for one further period of five years.

(e) Notwithstanding the identity of Investigators being known within the Church, no member of the Church nor any agent acting on their behalf nor any representative of that member shall be entitled to discuss with any Investigator the terms of any complaint except as specifically provided for in this Canon. Any breach of this provision may be treated as a breach of the confidentiality provision contained in Section 8 of this Canon.

12. INVESTIGATION

(a) The Investigator shall investigate any complaint referred to them under Section 10 of this Canon. They shall conduct their investigations in such manner as they shall reasonably determine and draw on such assistance as they consider appropriate.

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(b) The Investigator shall investigate each complaint, unless they have made a determination under Sections 13(a) of this Canon.

(c) The Investigator shall have power to take statements from witnesses and to request sight and retention of all documents held by any person or body within or on behalf of the Church or the General Synod or any board or committee thereunder.

(d) Any such person or body within the Church holding such records shall allow sight of them or deliver them to the Investigator if requested to do so.

(e) In investigating a complaint relating to safeguarding matters, the Investigator shall seek the assistance and guidance of the Provincial Safeguarding Officer, the ACPO or any Assistant Provincial Safeguarding Officer in respect of safeguarding matters.

(f) The Investigator is entitled to obtain legal advice if they consider that necessary.

(g) The Investigator is required to seek advice on safeguarding matters from an independent safeguarding adviser.

(h) The Investigator shall be entitled to consult with and take advice from a clerical adviser. Where the Investigator wishes to do so they shall inform the Secretary. The Secretary shall inform the Secretary General of the need for a clerical adviser and the Secretary General shall appoint that adviser. The Investigator shall have regard to any advice given by the adviser.

(i) Where the Investigator does not request the assistance of a clerical adviser but the Secretary forms the view that it is necessary that the Investigator receives advice from such an adviser, the Secretary shall inform the Secretary General of their view and the Secretary General shall appoint an adviser. The Investigator shall have regard to any advice given by the adviser.

13. DETERMINATION OF NO MISCONDUCT

(a) If at any time after any preliminary investigation of an complaint, the Investigator considers that there is no case to answer (including because the complaint could not amount to misconduct even if the facts are proven, the complaint does not meet the

requirements of Sections 4 or 5 of this Canon or the complaint is manifestly vexatious) they shall determine that no further action shall be taken on the matter.

(b) If the Investigator makes a determination under Section 13(a) of this Canon, any Suspension imposed on the respondent under Section 7 of this Canon shall be lifted with effect from the day after the expiry of the 21day period or the completion of the appeal process referred to in sub-section (d) hereof if later.

(c) When the Investigator makes a determination under Section 13(a) of this Canon, the Secretary shall notify that determination and the Investigator's reasons for it to the respondent, the complainer, the Clerk to the College of Bishops and the Diocesan Bishop or Bishops concerned as soon as possible and in any case within two weeks of the determination.

(d) A decision of the Investigator under Section 13(a) may be appealed by the complainer in writing to the Secretary within 21 days of the determination being intimated to them.

(e) On receipt of such an appeal, the Secretary shall appoint a Second Investigator to review the evidence obtained during the investigation and the Investigator's decision. The Second Investigator shall have the powers set out in Section 12 of this Canon but shall not duplicate work already undertaken by the Investigator.

(f) The Second Investigator shall decide whether to uphold the Investigator's determination under Section 13(a). If the Second Investigator does not uphold that decision, the Investigator shall conclude their investigation and report to the Secretary in accordance with Section 15(a) of this Canon.

14. INVESTIGATION REVEALS EVIDENCE OF ANY OTHER OFFENCES BY THE RESPONDENT

(a) If, in the course of any investigation of an complaint, the Investigator finds evidence of matters not included in the original complaint but which may amount to misconduct, they shall consult the Secretary to determine whether or not to consider the evidence of such misconduct and to investigate it as if a complaint of the alleged misconduct had been made.

(b) When consulted, the Secretary shall assess whether the new matters would constitute an eligible complaint and Section 10 of this Canon shall apply.

(c) Where the Secretary determines that the new matter should not be treated as an eligible complaint no further steps are to be taken by the Investigator.

(d) Where the Secretary determines that the new matter should be treated as an eligible complaint the Investigator shall investigate the alleged further misconduct.

(e) As soon as possible after the Secretary has determined that the alleged further misconduct should be investigated as a separate complaint, the Secretary shall notify details of the separate complaint to:

(i) the respondent,

(ii) the Clerk to the College of Bishops,

(iii) the Diocesan Bishop or Bishops of the respondent, except when the respondent is a diocesan bishop, in which case the notice shall be sent to the Primus whom failing for any reason the Senior Bishop,

(iv) any potential complainer referred to in sub-section (a) hereof, and

(v) the Provincial Safeguarding Officer or the ACPO where the separate complaint relates to safeguarding matters.

15. PROVISION OF EVIDENCE AND REQUEST FOR WRITTEN RESPONSE

(a) The Investigator shall, when they have concluded their investigation, prepare and send to the Secretary a report of the investigation.

(b) Within two weeks of receipt of the Investigator's report, the Secretary shall provide the respondent with Investigator's report and the evidence relating to the complaint or complaints (including any complaint that the Investigator has decided to investigate in terms of Section 14 of this Canon).

(c) At the same time the Secretary shall send a written notice to the respondent, requesting a written response to the complaint or complaints.

(d) The request for a written response shall be in terms of Appendix No.24, Form B.

(e) The written response must be received by the Secretary within twenty-one days of the date of intimation of the notice issued under Section 15(b).

(f) Before the expiry of the twenty-one days, the respondent or someone acting on behalf of the respondent may request in writing an extension of time for a further period of not more than twenty-one days, to run from the expiry of the original twenty-one days.

(g) Where an extension is requested under Section 13(e), the Investigator may, on reasonable cause shown, grant the request and that will be communicated to the respondent by the Secretary.

16. FAILURE TO PROVIDE WRITTEN RESPONSE

If the respondent fails to submit a written response in response to the request made in terms of Section 15 of this Canon within the twenty-one day period, or the further extended period if granted, the Investigator may proceed to make a decision on the complaint under Section 17 of this Canon, notwithstanding the absence of said written response.

17. DECISIONS COMPETENT TO THE INVESTIGATOR

(a) The decisions which the Investigator can competently make are:
   (i) to refer the complaint to the Procurator for trial or;
   (ii) to decide that no further action shall be taken.

(b) At all times the Investigator and the Secretary retain the right to refer the complaint and the results of any investigation to the Police and to any other relevant public body.

18. NOTICE OF DECISION

(a) When the Investigator has made their decision under Section 17 regarding a complaint, the Secretary shall as soon as possible, and in any case within seven days of the date of the decision, give notice of that decision to:
   (i) the respondent,
   (ii) the complainer,
   (iii) the respondent's Diocesan Bishop, and
   (iv) the Clerk to the College of Bishops.

(b) The notice of the decision shall be in terms of Appendix No.24, Form C, and shall contain the following information:

(i) the name of the complainer and the date of signature of the complaint;
(ii) the misconduct allegedly committed, including any misconduct in respect of which the Investigator found evidence;
(iii) where an offence is alleged under Section 3(viii) of this Canon (Violation of the Code of Canons), reference to the Canons and Sections thereof allegedly contravened;
(iv) the decision of the Investigator in relation to each complaint; and
(v) the reasons for the Investigator's decision.

PART III - THE PROCURATOR OF THE CHURCH

19. THE PROCURATOR OF THE CHURCH

(a) A Procurator shall be appointed by the Standing Committee for a period of five years.
(b) The Standing Committee may appoint more than one Procurator at any given time.
(c) A person may be appointed as a Procurator only if they are a practising member of the Faculty of Advocates or a solicitor holding a practising certificate from the Law Society of Scotland and have been practising as such a member of the Faculty of Advocates and/or as such a solicitor throughout the period of 10 years immediately preceding their appointment. ("a qualifying lawyer").
(d) At the expiry of the five-year period, a Procurator shall be eligible for re-appointment by the Standing Committee.
(e) An appointment under this Section shall automatically end if the Procurator ceases to be a qualifying lawyer.
(f) Notwithstanding sub-section (e) hereof if a Procurator is engaged in a trial procedure under this Canon when he or she ceases to be a qualifying lawyer, the appointment may continue until the end of that trial procedure with the consent of the Standing Committee.

20. REFERRAL TO THE PROCURATOR

(a) Where the Investigator decides under Section 17 of this Canon to refer the complaint to the Procurator for trial, it shall send to the Procurator:

(i) a copy of the notice of its decision sent to the respondent,

(ii) the principal copy of the complaint,

(iii) all documents, statements and other information gathered by the Investigator during their investigation,

(iv) the written response submitted by the respondent in terms of Section 15 of this Canon, and

(v) the minutes of all relevant meetings of the Investigator.

21. PROCURATOR REQUIRES ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

(a) A Procurator may require the Investigator to make further investigation or obtain additional information in respect of a complaint, and the Investigator shall conduct such further investigations and endeavour to obtain such additional information.

(b) If, as the result of such further investigations, evidence is obtained of the commission of further misconduct relating to a matter in which the Investigator has made a decision, an allegation concerning such further misconduct may be included by the Procurator in the Notice of Hearing, notwithstanding that the respondent was not asked to submit a written response in terms of Section 15 of this Canon in respect of that matter.

(c) The Procurator shall notify the respondent, the Clerk to the College of Bishops and (except when the respondent is a Diocesan Bishop) the Diocesan Bishop or Bishops of the respondent, of the alleged further misconduct and shall request a written response, in terms of Section 15 of this Canon.

(d) Such request, so far as reasonably practicable, shall be made at least one calendar month before the issue of any Notice of Hearing under Section ? of this Canon.

22. DECISION NOT TO PROCEED TO HEARING

(a) At any time after referral to a Procurator and prior to the issue of a Notice of Hearing in terms of Section 24 of this Canon, that Procurator may decide that no hearing shall take place in relation to any complaint referred.

(b) In the event that a Procurator decides that a complaint shall not proceed to a hearing, that Procurator shall intimate this decision to the respondent, the Secretary, the

Investigator, the Diocesan Bishop, the Clerk to the College of Bishops and the complainer.

(c) Notice shall be given in terms of Form D of Appendix No.24.

23. PROCURATOR'S CONSIDERATION OF CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

Where a criminal conviction is referred to the Procurator under Section 6 of this Canon, the Procurator shall treat it as a complaint referred to them and Sections 20 to 22 of this Canon shall apply.

PART IV – PRE-HEARING PROCEDURE

24. NOTICE OF HEARING

(a) A Notice of Hearing shall be issued by the Procurator to the respondent at least two calendar months prior to the date fixed for the hearing.

(b) The respondent may apply to the President of the Tribunal for a later date for the trial on cause shown.

(c) The Notice of Hearing shall be in terms of Form E of Appendix No.24, or as nearly as may be, and shall specify in respect of each complaint:

(i) the misconduct allegedly committed, which, in the case of an offence under Section 3(viii) of this Canon, shall include reference to the Canon and Section thereof allegedly contravened;

(ii) the alleged facts on which the misconduct is based;

(iii) the date or dates on which the misconduct is alleged to have occurred, and the place or places of the said misconduct;

(iv) the date and place of the hearing; and

(v) the date of issue of the Notice of Hearing.

(d) The Notice of Hearing shall also specify that the respondent is entitled to seek legal advice and to be legally represented at the hearing and at any appeal.

(e) The Notice of Hearing shall in addition require each of the parties to send to the Clerk of the Tribunal and to all other parties:

(i) a list of all documents on which they proposes to rely,

(ii) copies of all the documents listed in sub-paragraph (ii) and

(iii) a list of all witnesses whom the party proposes to call.

(f) The lists and copies mentioned in paragraph (e) shall, unless otherwise ordered by the Tribunal, be sent by the parties at least fourteen days before the date fixed for the trial.

(g) If any of the lists or copies mentioned in paragraph (e) are not sent out, the Tribunal at the hearing may have regard to all circumstances concerning such non-timeous delivery.

(h) The Procurator may include in the Notice of Hearing a complaint in relation to which no allegation was included in the original complaint, and in relation to which no decision has been made by the Investigator.

25. RESPONDENT TO LODGE ANSWER TO NOTICE OF HEARING

(a) Within one calendar month from the date of issue of the Notice of Hearing, the respondent shall lodge with the Clerk of the Tribunal an Answer to the Notice in terms of Form F of Appendix No.24.

(b) The Answer shall be signed by the respondent and shall specify what plea the respondent intends to enter to each complaint listed in the Notice of Trial, that is Guilty or Not Guilty.

26. ACCEPTANCE OF PLEAS OF GUILTY

(a) Where the Procurator accepts a plea of Guilty intimated in accordance with Section 25 of this Canon the Procurator shall, within seven days of the lodging of the said Answer, lodge in process an Acceptance of said plea in terms of Form G of Appendix No.24, or as nearly as may be.

(b) A copy of the said Acceptance shall be sent to the respondent and all other parties.

27. A LATER PLEA OF GUILTY

(a) The respondent may at any time before the commencement of the trial intimate in writing a plea of Guilty to any complaint contained in the Notice of Hearing, and the Procurator may accept that plea.

(b) A plea of Guilty intimated in terms of paragraph (a) must be signed by the respondent and lodged with the Clerk to the Tribunal.

(c) Where the Procurator accepts a plea of Guilty intimated in terms of sub-paragraph (a), the Procurator shall, within seven days of the lodging of the said written plea, lodge in process an Acceptance of said plea in terms of Form G of Appendix No.24.

(d) A copy of the said Acceptance shall be sent to the respondent and all other parties

28. ACCEPTANCE OF PLEAS OF GUILTY TO SOME COMPLAINTS

(a) Where the Procurator has lodged an Acceptance of Plea to an complaint in terms of Section 26 or Section 27 of this Canon but there are one or more outstanding complaints for which pleas of Not Guilty have been tendered (referred to in this Section as "remaining complaints"), the Procurator shall consider as soon as possible whether, in the whole circumstances, it is appropriate to continue to trial on one or more of the remaining complaints. The Procurator shall advise the Clerk to the Tribunal of his decision in this regard, who will advise the Tribunal and the other parties accordingly. If the Procurator decides that one or more of the remaining complaints should proceed to trial, they will so proceed.

(b) Sentence on all complaints will be deferred until the sentencing hearing.

29. EARLY DIET WHERE PLEAS OF GUILTY ARE ACCEPTED BEFORE TRIAL

(a) Where the Procurator has lodged an Acceptance of Plea in relation to any complaint, and there are no outstanding complaints in respect of the respondent or any co-defender, the sentencing hearing shall take place within two weeks of the date of the lodging of said Acceptance to pronounce sentence in respect of any pleas of Guilty.

(b) The Clerk of the Tribunal shall notify the respondent of the date and place of the sentencing hearing arranged in terms of subsection (a).

30. DECISION NOT TO LEAD EVIDENCE

At any time after the respondent has lodged an Answer in accordance with Section 25 of this Canon and prior to the leading of evidence at the trial, the Procurator may decide that no evidence be led in relation to any complaint.

31. RESIGNATION OF RESPONDENT

(a) The resignation of the respondent following the making of a complaint under this Canon shall not prevent the Secretary, Investigator, Procurator and Tribunal from continuing to exercise their powers and duties under this Canon and, in particular, shall not prevent the Investigator referring a complaint to the Procurator for trial, shall not prevent the Procurator leading evidence and shall not prevent the Hearing Panel hearing and determining the complaint.

(b) Where, following referral by the Investigator to the Procurator for trial of any complaint and prior to the conclusion by sentence or otherwise of all outstanding complaints against a cleric that cleric resigns from or otherwise demits every office held in this Church and the Procurator determines that trial process should be brought to an end, the College of Bishops shall have the discretion to issue to whomsoever it considers appropriate a Notice in terms of Form H of Appendix No.24, or as nearly as may be, that the said cleric should not be given any further appointment or position within the Church without due consideration being given to the circumstances of that cleric's resignation or demission of office.

PART V - THE CLERGY DISCIPLINE TRIBUNAL OF THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

32. COMPOSITION OF TRIBUNAL

(a) The Tribunal shall comprise eleven members, namely:

(i) three practising lawyers of at least ten years standing, appointed by the General Synod;

(ii) three clerics from the order of Priest or Deacon, appointed by the General Synod;

(iii) three communicant lay members of the Church, appointed by the General Synod; and

(iv) two Bishops (whose number may include retired Bishops and Bishops from other provinces in the Anglican Communion), appointed by the College of Bishops.

(b) It shall be the responsibility of the Standing Committee to ensure that at least one nomination be made for each position to which the General Synod has the power to appoint.

(c) The members of the Tribunal shall hold office for three years from the date of their appointment and may be re-appointed to serve for further terms of office.

(d) The Standing Committee shall nominate one of the practising lawyers appointed to serve as a member of the Tribunal to be the President of the Tribunal.

(e) The Standing Committee shall have the power to fill any vacancy on the Tribunal (or, where the member concerned is a Bishop, the College of Bishops shall have such power of appointment).

(f) The administrative functions of the Tribunal shall be undertaken by a Clerk of the Tribunal to be appointed by the Standing Committee. The Clerk of the Tribunal shall hold office during the pleasure of the Standing Committee.

(g) Where any member of the Tribunal is the subject of an complaint in respect of which a Notice of Hearing is issued under Section 24 of this Canon, that member shall be suspended from the membership of the Tribunal until the termination of proceedings under this Canon in relation to that complaint.

(h) Where a verdict of Guilty is returned or a plea of Guilty accepted in respect of such an complaint, the member shall forthwith cease to be a member of the Tribunal.

(i) Where any such suspension occurs whilst such a member of the Tribunal is participating in a hearing of the Tribunal, or for any other reason a member of the Tribunal is no longer able or willing to continue to participate in a hearing of the Tribunal such member shall cease to be present at such hearing and to participate in the deliberations of the Tribunal. Save as herein provided the proceedings of the Tribunal shall not be rendered invalid by reason of the absence of such member.

(j) The respondent shall be entitled to apply to the President of the Tribunal on cause shown for the proceedings of the Tribunal to be rendered invalid and a retrial ordered. A decision made in the exercise of discretion by the President of the

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Tribunal in respect of any such application may be the subject of an appeal to the Tribunal under its appellate jurisdiction.

33. RULES OF THE TRIBUNAL

(a) The Tribunal shall have power to adopt and to amend Rules which shall govern those matters relating to the procedure and conduct of the hearing (including any pre-hearing procedures) or any appeal, including evidential matters, not already provided for in the Code of Canons. The Tribunal shall cause to be published an up-to-date copy of the Rules so adopted and amended. In all matters not otherwise specified in the Code of Canons or Rules, the Tribunal/Hearing Panel may have regard to current practice in the Court of Session.

(b) The version of the Rules in force when the Notice of Hearing is issued shall apply throughout that trial and any pre-trial procedures, retrial or appellate proceedings.

(c) Any amendment of the Rules must first be approved by the President of the Tribunal and then agreed by a simple majority of the members of the Tribunal.

34. OTHER PROVISIONS

(a) Scots Law will be applied to all questions of law arising in proceedings brought under the Canon.

(b) Any question of law arising in the course of the Hearing or Appeal shall be determined by the those members of the Hearing Panel or Appeals Panel who are practising lawyers (and in the event of disagreement among such members by whichever of the practising lawyers has been qualified for the longest period of time).

(c) The Scottish Civil Law of Evidence shall apply to proceedings brought under the Canon.

(d) The standard of proof as to whether any facts have been established shall be determined on a balance of probabilities.

(e) The onus of proof is on the party asserting any factual matter. The Procurator bears the overall onus of proof in relation to a complaint.

(f) If a party fails to attend a hearing, the Tribunal may proceed with the hearing if satisfied that:

(i) the party has been notified of the hearing or that reasonable steps have been taken to notify the party of the hearing; and

(ii) it is in the interests of justice to proceed with the hearing.

(g) Each member of the Hearing Panel or Appeals Panel, as the case may be, shall have an equal vote in the determination of any matter by it.

35. JURISDICTION OF THE TRIBUNAL

(a) The Tribunal shall have a jurisdiction to hear and determine by a Hearing Panel all complaints under Section 5 of this Canon referred to it. When hearing such complaints the Tribunal shall sit with three of its members present, namely, one practising lawyer, one cleric (who shall be from the same order as the respondent) and one member of the laity.

(b) The Tribunal shall have an appellate jurisdiction to hear appeals referred to it under Section 38 of this Canon. When hearing such appeals, the Tribunal shall sit with three of its members present, of whom one must be a practising lawyer, one must be a cleric from the same order as the respondent and one must be a member of the laity. No member of the Tribunal who has heard a complaint as a member of the Hearing Panel shall have any involvement in the process provided under this sub-section in respect of the same complaint.

(c) Subject to the provisions of sub-sections (a) and (b) above, the President of the Tribunal shall determine which members of the Tribunal shall sit in relation to any particular proceedings under this Canon. The practising lawyer shall preside at the hearing.

(d) No-one with a close personal or professional connection with the complainer or the respondent or with the circumstances of the complaint should sit as a member of the Hearing Panel.

PART VI - TRIALS

36. THE HEARING

(a) A hearing may be held at any location or locations in Scotland. Any location or locations for a hearing shall be determined by the President of the Tribunal at the President's sole discretion. The President of the Tribunal may also determine, at the President's sole discretion, where circumstances require that the hearing shall be held at more than one location using electronic means of communication. The Clerk

of the Tribunal shall transmit the details of such location or locations to the Procurator for inclusion in the Notice of Hearing to be sent to the respondent.

(b) The hearing shall be held in private.

(c) At the hearing any evidence shall be recorded in such way as the Rules may direct, which evidence shall be certified in such way as the Rules may direct. The Hearing Panel may accept an unspent conviction of the respondent by a secular court having jurisdiction, as sufficient evidence of the fact that the respondent was convicted, and may accept a duly authenticated record of evidence given in any court of the United Kingdom in any cause affecting the respondent, as evidence in any case under this Canon: provided always that the respondent shall have the opportunity to adduce evidence prior to the Hearing Panel accepting such a conviction as conclusive, as well as in all other cases.

PART VII - JUDGMENT BY HEARING PANEL

37. VERDICT AFTER TRIAL

(a) The Hearing Panel shall pronounce the verdict in respect of each complaint on the last day of the trial or at some later date following due deliberation. The respondent may be found guilty or not guilty of each complaint or an amended complaint as the Hearing Panel may see fit. The verdict of the Hearing Panel in respect of any complaint or a complaint subject to any deletions that the Hearing Panel sees fit may be by a majority decision of the Hearing Panel.

(b) When pronouncing a guilty verdict, the Hearing Panel shall be entitled to fix a date for a sentencing hearing. The respondent will be invited to attend at the sentencing hearing and make representations as to the appropriate sentence. A sentence may be pronounced in the respondent's absence.

38. SENTENCE OF THE HEARING

(a) In respect of each verdict of guilty the Hearing Panel may pronounce sentence in terms of one or more of the following, as it sees fit:

(i) Absolute discharge;

(ii) Rebuke;

(iii) Prohibition against performing or refraining from performing a specified act or acts;

(iv) Requirement to undertake specified remedial training;

(v) Suspension from holding office for a defined period of time;

(vi) Removal from office;

(vii) Disqualification from holding office;

(viii) Prohibition from the exercise of the ministry of a Bishop, Priest or Deacon.

39. WRITTEN COPIES OF THE VERDICT

[TBC].

PART VIII – APPEALS

41. GROUNDS OF APPEAL

Both a respondent and the Procurator may appeal against verdict, sentence or both based on:

(a) the Hearing Panel having behaved in a manner that was procedurally improper,

(b) the Hearing Panel having made a significant error in finding the facts,

(c) the Hearing Panel's decision was based on an error of law,

(d) the Hearing Panel having acted irrationally in the exercise of its discretion, or

(e) the Hearing Panel having imposed an unreasonably severe or unduly lenient decision as to sentence.

42. NOTE ON APPEAL

(a) The grounds of appeal shall be stated in a Note of Appeal in terms of or as close as possible to Form A of Appendix No.25. The Note of Appeal shall be sent to the Clerk of the Tribunal to arrive within 21 days of sentence being pronounced. Failure to meet the 21 day deadline shall entail loss of the right to appeal unless there are extenuating circumstances, as determined by the President of the Tribunal.

(b) The Clerk of the Tribunal shall send a copy of the Note of Appeal to the Procurator and the respondent within 14 days of its receipt.

(c) The Clerk of the Tribunal shall send to the respondent and to the Procurator a Notice of Appeal Hearing in terms of or as close as possible to Form B of Appendix No.25, stating the date and location or locations of the appeal hearing. If any electronic

means of communication are being used at the appeal hearing, the details of same will be supplied with the Notice of Appeal Hearing.

(d) The Appeals Panel may hear additional evidence relevant to any alleged miscarriage of justice, where such additional evidence was not heard at trial and was not available and could not reasonably have been made available at trial and may make such findings in relation to such evidence as it sees fit.

(e) Having heard an appeal against conviction and/or sentence, the Appeals Panel may

(i) wholly or partly affirm the verdict and sentence;

(ii) wholly or partly affirm the verdict, but set aside the sentence, or substitute an amended sentence, whether more or less severe;

(iii) set aside the verdict and order a retrial;

(iv) quash the verdict and sentence.

(f) Where a retrial is ordered under (c) above, a new Notice of Trial in terms of Section 23 of this Canon shall require to be sent to the respondent within two months of the order for retrial.

PART IX - JUDGMENT ON APPEAL

43. JUDGMENT ON APPEAL

(a) The Tribunal may pronounce judgment on appeal on the last day of the Appeals Panel or at some later date. The Tribunal may retire for due deliberation before judgment on appeal is pronounced. Judgment on appeal shall be made in respect of each individual ground of appeal and may be by unanimous or majority decision of the Tribunal.

(b) A copy of the written judgment on appeal shall be sent to both a respondent whose verdict and/or sentence is the subject of an appeal and the Procurator by the Clerk of the Tribunal. The judgment on appeal shall be entered by the Clerk of the Tribunal in the records of the Tribunal and shall be available for inspection by any person making application to the Clerk of the Tribunal.

(c) The Clerk of the Tribunal shall advise any complainer, in respect of whose complaint or amended complaint the written judgment on appeal has been pronounced, of the outcome of the appeal.

(d) The Clerk of the Tribunal shall be entitled to redact relevant personal information from the copy of the written judgment on appeal issued to any person making application for same.

(e) A respondent whose verdict and/or sentence is the subject of an appeal may be legally advised in connection with and legally represented at any appeal hearing.

DRAFT

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

Written by staff and advisers on the instruction of the Administration Board

The current Complaints Procedure[1] in use by the Scottish Episcopal Church was adopted by General Synod in 2021 as an initial step to improving the Church's process for handling complaints. The Administration Board have begun work to review and revise the Procedure and have identified some questions for discussion with General Synod prior to drafting a Procedure for approval.

When considering these questions, General Synod should note that **safeguarding complaints are not in scope for this activity** as they are covered by the Safeguarding Policy.

Process for raising a concern or complaint

The Administration Board have considered carefully the range of matters which might be the substance of a complaint. There are many points on which people might disagree, and not all constitute a matter eligible for complaint. Some situations might be resolved informally and locally without escalation to a complaint procedure, but only where the culture is conducive to doing so calmly and effectively.

On this basis, there are a number of resources or principles we could introduce:

(a) **A consistent understanding of giving and receiving feedback constructively.** Members of the Administration Board have experience of various feedback processes and recognise the limitations of encouraging people to resolve situations informally without appropriate training.

(b) **Recognition of risk of abuse of power.** Attempts to resolve a situation without escalation should never be a suppression of legitimate concern or complaint, especially where the complaint relates to a person or group holding power.

(c) **Nominated individuals in each setting with capacity and training.** The roles of People's Warden and Rector's Warden in a vestry are designed to help with this, among their other responsibilities. Not all vestries have these roles, whether named as such or using other titles, and so provision is not consistent. It is possible that some updating of resources or training for vestries may be required.

Raising a formal complaint

Bishops are issued with guidance in responding to complaints which, once the procedure is revised, will require updating. Often, they will ask their Dean to review a complaint and discuss it with the complainant/s on the basis that it may require further escalation at a later point and that support offered by the Dean will help to identify whether this can be resolved prior to such escalation.

[1] SEC-Complaints-Procedure-as-adopted-at-General-Synod-2021.pdf

This requires some infrastructure in terms of:

(d) **Timelines for acknowledging and responding to a complaint.** The Administration Board welcomes suggestions from General Synod as to appropriate timescales. Some other sectors operate a requirement for a formal complaint to be acknowledged within seven days and a finding returned within 28 days (or confirmation that there is a reason why it cannot by returned within 28 days and an alternative timescale indicated).

(e) **Delegation and response systems.** If a complaint submitted to a bishop or a dean must be responded to within, say, seven days, a system to monitor emails and correspondence would be required during planned or unplanned absence of the bishop or dean or during intensively busy times in the liturgical year.

(f) **A time bar for the matter which is the substance of the complaint.** Following extensive discussion, the Administration Board agreed to invite the wisdom of General Synod in terms of a time bar which would introduce a limit on the matter being complained about based on how long ago it allegedly happened. While recognising that it is unfair to "sit on" a complaint for many years and make it at a time when it is difficult to remember accurately, the Administration Board recognised that a complaint might relate to a pattern of behaviour and therefore not a single date or occasion. **The Administration Board recognises that safeguarding complaints are not subject to a time bar.**

Methods for seeking to resolve a situation

In this province, there are various ways in operation to resolve a situation during a formal complaint process. Pastoral conversations, mediation, facilitated processes and other methods are among those used by rectors, chaplains, bishops and deans as required.

The Administration Board have noted that:

(g) **Such interventions should always be offered supportively.** These are not punishments and are always introduced in order to find a pastoral solution to a situation. Where a person or persons are encouraged to change something about the way they work or behave, this should be expressed constructively. Any referrals to counselling, spiritual direction, or specialist services must be made in the spirit of helping and supporting a fellow member of the Body of Christ.

(h) **Such interventions should be offered as early in a situation as possible.** The Administration Board are mindful of the Faith & Order Board and Committee on Canons approach to design formal canonical processes for use when other processes have not succeeded in resolving a situation. This means that referral to some canonical processes, such as Canon 54, will not be valid if such earlier interventions through the Complaint Procedure have not been attempted or completed[2].

[2] The proposed draft Canon 54 and the proposed Draft Code of Conduct recognise some forms of gross misconduct which must be escalated directly without delay, such as disclosure of criminal conviction and single actions or events of gross misconduct where the behaviour causes or could reasonably be expected to cause major risk or harm

(i) **Not all complaints will require such interventions.** There will be some complaints which can be investigated and addressed without a pastoral, mediated or facilitated process which involves the complainant. In such cases, the person handling the complaint (which might be a bishop or a dean) might investigate it themselves or commission a professional to do so. Possible outcomes might include but not be limited to dismissing the complaint, upholding the complaint and requiring the person being complained about to take some corrective action, or another outcome.

Information sharing

The Administration Board has heard clearly that some Deans reported that a common question at the end of a mediation or facilitated process is "what can we tell people?". Situations which lead to such processes are sometimes a matter of common knowledge, and questions motivated by curiosity or concern are perhaps inevitable.

This prompts some matters for consideration:

(j) **Agreeing a form of words.** A facilitated process might include a final stage where those involved agree a form of words which can be used in response to queries about the situation. Once agreed, only this form of words would be permitted and any further disclosure would constitute breach of the proposed Canon 69 on confidentiality.

(k) **Limits to disclosing private information**. Where a complaint has been investigated without a mediated process (such as noted in (i) above), the person handling the complaint might write to the complainant confirming that the complaint has been investigated and appropriate action taken without describing the action. This might be due to personal circumstances of the person being complained about which must remain private or because the person being complained about has been disciplined or referred to a specialist service or another outcome which is confidential.

General Synod June 2026

During the June 2026 sessions, General Synod shall be invited to comment on the questions and observations outlined above.

CODE OF CONDUCT DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

Written by staff and advisers on the instruction of the Administration Board

The document supplied to General Synod is a draft for discussion and is not laid before General Synod for approval at this stage.

1. As part of the work on conduct and discipline, a policy document along the lines of a Code of Conduct is required to:

   (a) Define expectations of conduct, setting a clear and positive vision of the ways we will work well together;

   (b) Identify forms of misconduct and gross misconduct; and

   (c) Provide a resource to clarify expectations and support early, low-level resolution where possible prior to considering whether a formal process under a relevant canon is required.

Misconduct and gross misconduct

2. The Administration Board has discussed this document thoroughly. The Board has requested a clear outline of acceptable and aspirational conduct, and has discussed carefully the forms of misconduct and gross misconduct outlined in the draft document.

3. The Administration Board noted that "risk-taking but legal behaviour" as defined in the draft document is based on legal advice. While practising unhealthy, dependent or addictive habits does not solely present a problem where such habits result in poor behaviour. Rather, practising the habit to excess without it resulting in poor behaviour constitutes risk to the person, to those around them and potentially to people being served by the Church. In addressing the point, the Administration Board made very clear their desire that response should not be judgemental and that such habits must always be addressed pastorally first before being addressed as misconduct.

4. The Administration Board noted that "violation of the Code of Canons" is a broad category and encompasses a wide range of matters. This is intentional in order to avoid listing forms of misconduct which are already noted in the Canons. In considering these, the Administration Board noted that a proportional and reasonable approach must be taken.

5. The Administration Board noted that homophobic, sexist, racist and other discriminatory or unsafe behaviour are unacceptable and, instead of listing this as a form of misconduct, have included as a statement of acceptable and aspirational behaviour the Church's commitment to being an accessible and inclusive Church.

6. The Administration Board noted that "failure to act promptly upon a disclosure" builds on the learning and practice of safeguarding and broadens responsibility to consideration of all people – not solely children and vulnerable adults – to recognise the importance of responding to disclosures of various kinds. This acknowledges and addresses the ongoing work in various sectors on "professional curiosity" and seeks to reduce the risk of actual or perceived collusion. The Administration Board noted the feedback and criticism levelled at other provinces and denominations for failing to act appropriately on disclosures where this has enabled abuse of power or ongoing harm.

Implementation

7. The Administration Board noted that this document does not require a formal implementation process as this is covered in the Complaints Procedure, which is in development. Instead, the reporting protocols mentioned in this document are intended for informal resolution at an early stage, noting that where this is not possible the Complaints Procedure should be used.

8. While discussing the practicalities of identifying and addressing misconduct informally, the Administration Board noted that vestries vary in their composition and their ways of working. While some vestries nominate a member to act as People's Warden and another to act as Rector's Warden, not all do this. Some vestries have not been able to identify someone to act as liaison with the congregation in this way. This has been noted by the Secretary General along with other helpful learning points about the resources required by vestries which have been identified during this work.

General Synod June 2026

9. During the June 2026 sessions, General Synod shall be provided with discussion questions and invited to comment on the draft Code of Conduct.

Scottish Episcopal Church Code of Conduct

Draft for General Synod to review

Purpose

This Code of Conduct reflects the Scottish Episcopal Church's aspiration to a culture of kindness, common purpose and welcome so that all worshippers are appropriately encouraged to live, work and minister well together for our good and for the good of God's holy Church.

Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to Church Workers in the Scottish Episcopal Church. Church Workers are *'clergy and lay workers, whether stipendiary or non-stipendiary, employed or volunteers'.* (2020 safeguarding policy definitions). See Appendix 1 for further details.

This document serves as a resource to clarify expectations of conduct of Church Workers and definitions of misconduct and gross misconduct.

Principles and aspirations

Church Workers are required to understand and comply with relevant legislation in Scots and UK law including but not limited to charity law, and to understand and comply with ecclesiastical law as set out in the Code of Canons and Digest of Resolutions. Particular attention must be paid to legislation, canons, policies and guidance relating to safeguarding.

This code of conduct recognises the Guidelines for Professional Conduct of the Clergy (2005) which was based on the Scottish Ordinal 1984, which offer guidance for pastoral and ministry situations, and recognises the Code of Conduct for Conveners and Members of the Boards and Committees of General Synod.

This is required in all Church settings and contexts and by all Church Workers. To protect individuals and groups of people within the Church and in the wider community, these safeguards are in place:

- Conduct which is identified as criminal will be reported to the police.
- When a child or protected adult is identified as being at immediate risk of harm, statutory authorities will be informed.
- Victims of crime will be encouraged to report the matter to the police.
- Misconduct that meets the criteria set by the Scottish Government will be referred to Disclosure Scotland.

DRAFT

Acceptable and aspirational conduct

As Anglican Christians, we seek to live according to the teaching of Scripture, mediated by tradition and reason[1]. In particular, we call to mind the fruits of the Spirit as listed in Galatians 5:22-23.

The Scottish Episcopal Church recognises all persons as made in the image of God and seeks to be an accessible and inclusive Church, celebrating the diversity of all people and reflecting this in the way we speak and behave with one another.

Categories of misconduct and gross misconduct

Here are some of the forms of behaviour which the Scottish Episcopal Church recognises as misconduct. For the most part, single or infrequent instances of such misconduct can reasonably be addressed through pastoral support and, where necessary, signposting to services that might help someone understand and address their own behaviour.

The Scottish Episcopal Church considers gross misconduct to be:

- A pattern of misconduct which is wilful, sustained and repeated despite requests to amend behaviour and supportive measures implemented to help the person to do so
- A single action or event, or a small number of such instances, where the behaviour causes or could reasonably be expected to cause major risk or harm
- Behaviour which is the subject of a criminal charge or conviction, subject to certain thresholds

Misconduct

- Risk-taking but legal behaviour which creates vulnerability to making unwise decisions, being of limited capacity, or vulnerable to the duress of others (alcohol, drugs, gambling, viewing or participating in pornography etc). This must be addressed pastorally before it can be considered to be misconduct.
- Breach of stated policies including but not limited to safeguarding policies
- Violating the Code of Canons
- Spiritual abuse as defined in Church policy (safeguarding policy describes this)
- Physical, sexual, emotional/psychological or financial abuse
- Abuse of power or failing to observe appropriate or professional boundaries
- Bullying or harassment as defined in Church policy
- Habitual or wilful neglect of the duties of clerical office or of any position of trust or responsibility connected with the office of Church Worker to which the person is appointed
- Breach of confidentiality

[1] The Role of Scripture, Tradition & Reason - The Anglican Communion Office

- Failure to act promptly upon a disclosure where the matter disclosed includes allegation or suspicion of an offence or behaviour which gives rise to harm being caused to a person
- Failure to disclose correctly a criminal conviction or a prohibition from working with a vulnerable group or groups

Raising a concern about misconduct or gross misconduct

Where someone has a concern, they might feel able to address it calmly with the person whom they think is behaving in a way that constitutes misconduct or gross misconduct. In many cases, a careful conversation giving feedback[2] or checking on the person's welfare can resolve a low-level situation. In some charges and cathedrals, the vestry includes a People's Warden[3] who can help churchgoers raise concerns appropriately.

There will be times when this is not appropriate or where the person who has identified the concern is not confident to raise it or does not feel safe to do so. The Scottish Episcopal Church complaint process is designed to help people raise concerns calmly and safely where it has not been possible to resolve the situation informally.

Gross misconduct should be reported promptly, in order to protect others and – where appropriate – to help the person perpetrating it to recognise and amend their behaviour. Where a cleric has behaved in a way which is considered gross misconduct (see above), they should be reported to their diocesan bishop or, if they are a bishop, to the Primus. The procedure for assessing gross misconduct of clergy licensed in the Scottish Episcopal Church is called Canon 54.

Where a lay Church Worker has behaved in a way which is considered gross misconduct, they should be reported to their Rector. If in doubt, the office of the diocesan Bishop or Dean can help to identify and address gross misconduct.

Appendix 1

This is a list of roles and responsibilities which are included in the category of Church Worker. It is indicative rather than exhaustive and is intended to serve as a useful guide to the types of roles recognised by the Scottish Episcopal Church.

(a) Clergy

Any bishop, priest or deacon licensed to minister in the Scottish Episcopal Church. Also described as cleric, clerk in holy orders.

(b) Lay workers

A person (either not ordained, or ordained but not licensed to minister in the Scottish Episcopal Church) who shares in the Church's ministry.

[2] Administration Board have noted that there is not a consistent approach to giving and receiving feedback and that this poses some risk.

[3] Administration Board have noted that this is not always the case and so provision of such support is not consistent.

Helping/working/ministering **in or on behalf of the worshipping community** (which might be a charge or a cathedral), such as:

Ministry and Liturgy – Lay Readers, Lay Ministers, prayer ministry, worship leading, Director of Music, etc.

Activities within the building which is the place of worship, either during or outside of a worship service – children's clubs, flower arranging, lunch club for older people, serving at the altar, playing a musical instrument or singing in a choir or worship band, welcome team, etc, etc.

Activities in the community on behalf of the place of worship – pastoral visiting, leading offsite activities such as Alpha, house group leader, etc, etc.

Governance – vestry member or member of a committee or working group recognised by the vestry

Helping/working/ministering **in or on behalf of the diocese or province**, such as:

Governance – member of Diocesan, General or Electoral Synod, member of a committee or working group in the diocese or province, member of Diocesan or Provincial Standing Committee

Ministry or other activity – helping on an ad hoc or regular basis to further the work of Net Zero, generous giving, worship or liturgical activities, devotional or formational activities, etc, etc, where this is recognised by the diocese or province.

DRAFT

CANON FOR SECOND READING - OPINIONS FROM DIOCESES 2026

Amendment to Schedule to Canon 22

On the Second Reading of the Proposal that Blessing of a Marriage (2025) be added to the Schedule to Canon 22

Aberdeen and Orkney:

The indicative vote was unanimously in favour across all three houses.

Comments

- Could there be more than one introduction e.g. adding the journey introduction from the Marriage Liturgy 2007, it's very apt for a renewal of vows.
- Can it be made clear that it's the Scottish Liturgy (1982, revised 2022).

Argyll and The Isles:

There were no comments.

Brechin:

Votes were as follows:

Laity	in favour – 18; against – 0; abstained - 0
Clergy	in favour – 15; against – 0; abstained - 0
Bishop	in favour

Comments

As clergy have been doing such blessings for many years with their own material, does the authorisation of this new liturgy mean that this is the only form that can be used? The response from the chair was that this is a resource to assist clergy in this pastoral ministry.

Edinburgh:

No opinions but this was supported by Synod. Rosie Addis has collated one or two comments but matters of detail not principle

Glasgow and Galloway:

There were no comments.

Moray, Ross and Caithness:

There were no comments.

St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane:

The Diocesan Synod approved unanimously.

Comments

- Useful pastoral resource
- Rings are not directly blessed (it was pointed out that the text comes from the marriage liturgy which is an authorised liturgy).
- Use of "heal their memories" on p10. Why use such language?

ALTERATIONS TO THE CODE OF CANONS

VOTING PROCEDURES – AN EXPLANATORY NOTE

The alteration of a Canon contained in the Code of Canons requires two "readings" in successive years at the General Synod. The voting procedure on each reading is different. An alteration, for these purposes, includes any modification or abrogation of any Canon, any addition to a Canon and the enacting of any new Canon. The process is set out in Canon 52, Section 17.

Canons for First Reading

A first reading requires a simple majority of the members of each house of Synod, present and voting. Voting is, therefore, in houses.

Canons for Second Reading

A second reading requires a two-thirds majority of the members of each house of Synod, present and voting. (Again, therefore, voting is in houses.) Before confirming any alterations at a second reading, the Synod must consider any opinions received from Diocesan Synods.

On a second reading, amendments may be incorporated provided they are not, in the judgement of the chair, irrelevant to, beyond the scope of or inconsistent with the general subject-matter and purport of the Canon as put to Diocesan Synods after the first reading. Such amendments must themselves receive a two-thirds majority.

Also, no amendment may be moved on a second reading which, in the judgement of the chair, does not substantially reflect an opinion communicated by a Diocesan Synod or is not merely a verbal or drafting amendment unless due notice has been given or the Chair grants leave to dispense with notice. Due notice, for this purpose, means that notice must have been received by the time limit stipulated for the receipt of resolutions when the notice convening the Synod is despatched (Canon 52, Resolution 10).

Dr Dee Bird
Secretary General

A PRECIOUS GIFT FOR THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

Proposal to institute the "Feast of Creation" in national liturgical calendars

"In the beginning was the Word... All things came to be through him."

Gospel of John

I. THE OPPORTUNITY

The "Feast of Creation", also known as "Creation Day", is celebrated annually on September 1st or the subsequent Sunday. Grounded in an ancient liturgical tradition, in 1989 the Orthodox Church invited all Christians to pray together on that day; since then, the feast has gained much popularity across denominations (together with the extended Season of Creation that flows from Creation Day). An ecumenical process chaired by the World Council of Churches in collaboration with 13 world communions is now elevating the day to **become an official liturgical feast** in the calendars of non-Byzantine churches, to celebrate more intentionally this great mystery of our Christian faith. Even if more reflection is needed, a broad **ecumenical consensus** emerged between many denominations about the importance of this joint step, as illustrated by the report *"An Ecumenical Dream for the Third Millennium"*. Namely, the new feast is:

- a **liturgical opportunity** to fill a gap of the liturgical year, which is meant to ponder the whole mystery of Christ but still neglects the role of Christ in the creation of heaven and earth;
- a **pastoral opportunity** to accompany the faithful in confronting the "signs of the times" of the ecological crisis, both by lamenting the losses experienced and nurturing care of creation;
- a **witness opportunity** to inspire a more prophetic Christian response to the sinful desecration of God's gift of creation, an existential imperative in many regions;
- an **evangelization opportunity** with young people, both by speaking to their strong sensitivity to creation issues and by preaching about the compatibility between science and faith in a Creator;
- a **catechetical/formative opportunity** to ponder the sacredness of Creation and proclaim God as Creator, uplifting a notion that should receive as much attention as that of God as Redeemer;
- a **theological opportunity** to rediscover the great mystery of Creation, a Christological and Trinitarian doctrine that is a cornerstone of our faith;
- an **ecumenical opportunity** for visible unity with the many Christian churches that are instituting the Feast in their liturgical calendars, an "East-to-West" step unprecedented since 1456.

Proposal by the WCC-led steering committee of the Feast of Creation (contact info: CreationFeast@gmail.com)

In a nutshell, the Feast of Creation commemorates (I) God's act of creation of all things through Christ, also bringing our attention to (II) the Holy Trinity as Creator and to (III) the created order as a sacramental and covenanted gift. See the paper ***"Theological Overview of the Feast of Creation"***. (The hope is that this theological understanding will deepen with further reflection and the liturgical celebrations of the Feast.)

II. THE PROPOSAL

Churches are invited to officially **establish the Feast of Creation** in their **national liturgical calendars**, or – if a formal calendar is not observed – to issue recommendations for congregations to celebrate the Feast.[1] Noteworthy is that in April 2026 the Feast was **added to the 'Revised Common Lectionary'** used by many Anglican and Protestant churches, which might simplify implementation (see next section).

- ***Recommended date:***

  The first Sunday of September, annually, for pastoral practicality.
  As other feasts with symbolic "fixed dates" (Epiphany, Ascension, etc) also moved to Sunday.
  (Alternatively, last Sunday of August if preferable for national calendar purposes.)

- ***Recommended title:***

  Based on the insights of various academic conferences, one of the following titles is suggested.

  1. Christological approach *[favored by most liturgists, see explanation]:*

     "Feast of Creation in Christ"

  2. Trinitarian approach:

     "Feast of Creation by the Triune God"

  3. "Straightforward" approach:

     "Feast of Creation" *(or "Creation Day" or "Creation Sunday")*

  4. Combined approach:

     e.g. ***"Feast of Creation in Christ", also known as "Feast of Creation"***
     or ***"Feast of Creation", also known as "Feast of Creation in Christ"***

  See: Memo on title options and the preference of liturgical scholars for a Christological title, as well as the "Theological Overview" of the Feast with further background about the complementarity of approaches.

To support the implementation, liturgical resources and lectionary readings are being prepared by the WCC-led global committee coordinating the process (see section V). Several Anglican churches were among the first to approve resolutions in national synods, with implementation set to begin from 2026 onwards.

Important note*: more intentional celebration of the Feast of Creation in liturgical calendars will complement and enhance the ecumenical observance of the extended Season of Creation (Sept 1 - Oct 4) that flows from the Feast. So, besides the liturgical celebration of the new Feast (to take place "denominationally" in Sunday services within congregations), churches are also encouraged to participate in ecumenical prayer services and initiatives bringing churches together during the extended season.*

[1] Proposal not applicable for Eastern Orthodox (for whom Sept 1 already is a liturgical feast) and Roman Catholics (who celebrate this day with the Vatican's new "Creation Mass" liturgy).

III. SAMPLE TEMPLATE FOR THE RESOLUTION TO BE ADOPTED

Clarification for churches following RCL *(Revised Common Lectionary)*:

The Feast was officially added to RCL in April 2026. So, if your church already decided to follow RCL (list), the liturgy commission probably is already empowered to implement the RCL update, without a new mandate.

Otherwise, below is a sample template for consideration of your synod or governance body.

Motion: TO ADOPT THE "FEAST OF CREATION IN CHRIST" IN OUR CHURCH CALENDAR

Whereas:

- *The "Feast of Creation", also known as "Creation Day", is celebrated annually on September 1st or the subsequent Sunday. Grounded in an ancient liturgical tradition, in 1989 the Orthodox Church invited all Christians to pray together that day; since then, the feast has gained much popularity across denominations (together with the extended Season of Creation that flows from Creation Day). Inspired by the celebrations of the 1700 years of Nicaea, an ecumenical process led by various world communions and the World Council of Churches is now elevating the day to become an official liturgical feast in the calendars of the different churches, to celebrate more intentionally this great mystery of our Christian faith. A strong ecumenical consensus emerged between the different denominations about the importance of this joint step, as illustrated by the attached report "An Ecumenical Dream for the Third Millenium".*
- *The new liturgical feast will tap into many opportunities for our church: (I) a liturgical opportunity to fill a gap of the liturgical year, which is meant to ponder "the whole mystery of Christ" but still neglects the role of Christ in the creation of heaven and earth; (II) a pastoral opportunity to support and accompany the faithful in confronting the "signs of the times" of the ecological crisis, nurturing action to care for our imperiled creation in solidarity with the communities most vulnerable to this injustice; (III) an evangelization opportunity with young people, both by speaking to their strong sensitivity to creation issues and their calls for intergenerational justice, and by preaching about the compatibility between science and faith in a Creator; (IV) a catechetical opportunity to ponder the sacredness of Creation and proclaim God as Creator, uplifting a notion that should receive as much attention as that of God as Redeemer; (V) a theological opportunity to rediscover the great mystery of Creation, a Christological and Trinitarian doctrine that is a cornerstone of our faith; (VI) an ecumenical opportunity for visible unity with the many churches instituting the Feast.*

This [NAME OF GOVERNANCE BODY] resolves to:

1. *Add the "Feast of Creation in Christ" to our liturgical calendar, for congregations to celebrate it annually on the first Sunday of September; this becomes effective from 2026 onwards. [IF NEEDED, REFRAME AS RECOMMENDATION]*
2. *Direct the Liturgical Commission [OR NAME OF RELEVANT BODY] to implement this decision in relevant liturgical books [IF THEY EXIST] and develop worship resources for the celebration of the new Feast, leveraging resources that might be available for alignment with the global ecumenical process.*
3. *Direct the Liturgical Commission [OR NAME OF RELEVANT BODY] to support [DIOCESES / DISTRICTS / SYNODS] in providing formation to all clergy, so that the worship resources might be received and implemented fruitfully.*
4. *Direct the Liturgical Commission [OR NAME OF RELEVANT BODY] to collaborate with relevant commissions as [NAMES TO BE ADDED], so that the new Feast is integrated in relevant facets of ecclesial life.*

IV. MATERIALS TO PRESENT THE PROPOSAL

- **Invitation letter** by WCC and world communions to their member churches.

- **Introductory slides** to present the proposal to relevant governance bodies in your church:
  - *Presentation:* "The Feast of Creation: An Ecumenical Dream for the Third Millennium *(Short)"*
  - *Presentation:* "The Feast of Creation: An Ecumenical Dream for the Third Millennium *(Long)"*
- **WCC webinar recording** about the Feast: https://youtu.be/F6i9Gukd5NI?t=116
- **Detailed resources** to go deeper:
  - *Ecumenical process report:* www.bit.ly/assisi-2025-report
  - *Theological synthesis report:* www.bit.ly/feast-of-creation-theology
  - *Theological report #1:* www.bit.ly/assisi-report
  - *Theological report #2:* www.bit.ly/assisi-2024-report

V. WORSHIP RESOURCES

- ***Liturgical texts:***
  - The Feast of Creation in Christ was officially adopted by the **Revised Common Lectionary** – see lectionary readings.
  - The Feast steering committee (WCC, MECC, CCT, and various world communions) is compiling sample liturgical prayers and worship resources, to be shared in workshops of April-May 2026.

  Subscribe to the Feast of Creation newsletter to receive liturgical resources when available in early 2026.

- ***Pastoral resources and comms materials****:* FeastOfCreation.com (to be updated for 2026 edition)

VI. SOME PRACTICALITIES FOR 2026 CELEBRATIONS

- If your church **already printed liturgical books/resources for 2026**, a solution to be implemented in some countries will be to simply prepare and offer the Feast's liturgical materials as a standalone "PDF-to-be-printed service" (it would require additional communication to clergy in 2026, but arguably well worth the effort since clergy outreach and formation resources will be required anyways).
- If your church does not follow the Revised Common Lectionary and if your relevant **governance body will not meet before Sept 2026**, as a first step your worship/liturgy commission might propose experimental liturgies for congregations to use in 2026, preparing the ground for a subsequent governance decision.

VII. AFTER THE DECISION IS MADE

Once the relevant governance body of your church makes the decision to adopt the Feast, please notify CreationFeast@gmail.com (ideally sending also the text of the decision), so that your church is added to a database tracking the Feast's adoption, to inspire other churches in your denomination and region.

VIII. CONTACT INFO FOR SUPPORT

Feel free to contact the Feast of Creation steering committee for any support you might need to implement the new Feast. *Contact:* CreationFeast@gmail.com

CANON 69 DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

Written by staff and advisers on the instruction of the Faith & Order Board

The document supplied to General Synod is a draft for discussion and is not laid before General Synod for First Reading.

1. During the work of the Committee on Canons to revise Canon 54, to replace Canon 53 with new Canons 67 (pastoral breakdown) and 68 (clergy raising a grievance) and to revise Canon 64, the Committee noted that appropriate containment of information is crucial for the effective operation of all these processes. The Committee expressed grave concern for the implications of inappropriate sharing of information, both in terms of the lack of respect and courtesy for sisters and brothers in Christ which this demonstrates and the practical consequences for the people concerned.

2. The Committee on Canons raised this with the Faith & Order Board who agreed to instruct the Committee on Canons to draft a new canon to address the requirement for appropriate confidentiality in a range of circumstances including but not limited to this work on conduct and discipline. They noted the confidentiality requirements of the process to elect a bishop, among other important matters, and agreed that such a canon may help people who hold information to do so appropriately and to resist pressure to disclose details which must be contained.

3. The Administration Board noted the development of this canon and discussed various circumstances where greater clarity of confidentiality requirements would be helpful. Their discussion recognised that this is also a question of culture, noting situations where private details of someone's life have been discussed openly without good reason.

4. An earlier draft of this canon was discussed thoroughly by the Faith & Order Board who requested various clarifications. The revised draft seeks to address carefully:

   (a) Situations where confidential information may be shared for important legal, regulatory, pastoral and safeguarding reasons;

   (b) The nature of information which must be treated as confidential; and

   (c) Prospective penalty for breaching this canon, consistent with powers described in other canons to impose penalties on clergy and laity.

5. While discussing this matter, the Faith & Order Board, the Committee on Canons and the Administration Board have all agreed that open and transparent ways of working must be supported and encouraged and that a canon on confidentiality does not compromise the Church's commitment to such working.

6. During the June 2026 sessions, General Synod shall be provided with discussion questions and invited to comment on the draft Canon 69.

CANON SIXTY NINE

OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF CANONICAL AND CHURCH PROCESSES

1 All persons who are subject to the Canons of the Church shall keep confidential all information provided to them in connection with proceedings under these Canons and shall not, in respect of such information, act in a way that would contravene (or result in a contravention by the Church of) any applicable laws (including but not limited to data protection and privacy laws).

2 The duty imposed by Section 1 of this Canon shall not prevent the sharing with the Provincial Safeguarding Officer, the Acting Provincial Safeguarding Officer or any relevant authority of any information relating to safeguarding matters (being those matters referred to in Canon 65).

3 The duty imposed by Section 1 of this Canon shall not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of seeking legal advice or for the purposes of seeking spiritual direction or pastoral support. Nor shall it prevent the sharing of information with relevant regulatory and law enforcement authorities.

4 A breach of this duty shall constitute a violation of the Canons of the Church.

5 In the case of a clerk in holy orders such a violation may constitute misconduct within the meaning of Canon 54.

6 In the case of a person other than a clerk in holy orders such a violation shall entitle the Bishop to disqualify that lay person from holding office within the Congregation or the diocese for a period not exceeding five years. The Bishop may also recommend to the Convenor of the Provincial Standing Committee that such lay person be disqualified from holding any provincial appointment.

DRAFT

Proposed Change to Standard Stipend

Background

General Synod 2021 agreed the following motions proposed by the Board

> ***Motion 20:***
> That from 2023, Standard Stipend should rise at rate one percentage point above the rate applied to the Church of England National Stipend Benchmark, or by one percentage point above CPI if greater, until such time as it reaches a level equal to 2006 Standard Stipend scaled up pro rata with CPI.
>
> ***Motion 21:***
> That in subsequent years, Standard Stipend maintain the same percentage uplift compared with Church of England National Stipend Benchmark, subject to a triennial review in the light of changes in CPI and other relevant factors.

Standard Stipend 2026

At its last meeting in August 2025, the Administration Board agreed to increase standard stipend to **£36,381** which was a 6% increase on the 2025 rate. More importantly, it meant that we had caught up and reached the 2006 standard stipend target.

Now that the target level has been reached, motion 21 now applies. However, at the August 2025 meeting, the Administration Board agreed a revision to Motion 21 be taken to General Synod 2026.

It would make more sense for SEC stipends to increase in line with CPI until such time as the Church of England stipend overtakes it and then we switch to keeping pace (and parity) with the National Stipend Benchmark.

Church of England National Stipend Benchmark

The Church of England agreed an increase of 10.7%, but this only brought their stipend benchmark to £34,950. That means our standard stipend is currently **4.1%** above that of the Church of England.

Proposed Revision to Motion 21

The proposed revision is:

Standard Stipend percentage uplift will be in line with CPI and will remain at least in line with the National Stipend Benchmark.

James Lloyd
24 March 2026

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Budget Report

Format

1. The summary of all Funds (page 98) details the 2025 actual figures in the first column and the 2026-2028 budget figures in the final three columns. The General Fund budget (page 99) details the 2025 budget, actual and variance figures in the first three columns and the 2026-2028 budget figures in the final three columns.

Budget setting process

2. Boards agree budgets each autumn for the subsequent year and indicative budgets for the following two years. The budgets and associated requests for funding from the General Fund are submitted to the Standing Committee for consideration at its meeting each year in November. Further revisions for known changes are considered by the Standing Committee at its April meeting.

3. In its oversight of the General Synod's finances the Standing Committee's focus is on the General Fund. The General Fund budget (which can be found at page 99) summarises all unrestricted income and its allocation to the Standing Committee and boards to fund their work. The budgeted allocations represent the planned expenditure of each of the boards. Thus, the General Fund statement provides a good overview of the overall financial position. In considering the budgets the Standing Committee is guided by the following principles:

- In the longer term budgets should be set with a view to achieving a broadly breakeven position in the General Fund.
- In the medium term the 'excess return' earned on the General Fund's investments is available, if required, to fund operational deficits.
- Large one-off receipts (such as legacies) should be capitalised to provide future income rather than being used to fund current operating costs.

Budget history

Investment income

4. The General Synod's main source of funding is its investment income derived mainly from its investments held in the SEC Unit Trust Pool. This accounts for approximately 71% of income. Over the last four years Investment Committee has been able to agree above inflation increases in the distribution rate. In 2025 the distribution was increased by 15.7% to 110p per unit. However, that future increase will be more modest than those of the last four years. For budgetary purposes an annual increase of about 3% is assumed for 2026 with increases of about 3% thereafter.

Quota income

5. The second largest source of income is the quota received from dioceses. In 2025 it accounted for 18% of total income.

6. For budgetary purposes it is assumed that, in the short term at least, quota increase will continue at a rate similar to recent years to compensate, at least partially, for previous reductions in quota. An increase of £35,000 (4.46%) in 2027 is proposed.

General Fund budgeted deficits

7. The General Fund budgets agreed by Standing Committee result in the following budgeted deficits:

2026 Deficit of £1,078,153
2027 Deficit of £1,038,230
2028 Deficit of £855,970

8. Whilst recent experience suggests that actual financial outcome may be better than budgeted the scale of the budgeted deficits is such that it is considered likely that deficits will be incurred in the next three years. These will be funded from the sale of investments. Standing Committee remains committed to ensuring that sufficient funds are available to provide appropriate training for authorised ministries within the SEC and to seek ways of developing new mission initiatives whilst providing appropriate support for existing ministries. It is also committed to fulfilling General Synod's commitment to work towards net zero by 2030 and will therefore seek to ensure sufficient funding is available to implement the Net Zero Action Plan. It will work with all Boards and Committees in addressing the financial challenges arising from the prospect of incurring deficits.

Total budgeted deficits

9. The budgets for all the Boards and Committees, including miscellaneous and restricted funds are summarised on page 98. These indicate the following budgeted total revenue deficits:

2026 Deficit of £1,116,362
2027 Deficit of £792,232
2028 Deficit of £598,712

10. The total budgeted surpluses / deficits differ from those budgeted for the General Fund due to small surpluses / deficits budgeted for some of the miscellaneous and restricted funds.

Cathy Johnston
Convener, Standing Committee
May 2026

QUOTA 2027

All quota received will be credited to the General Fund.

It is recommended that, total quota requested be increased by £35,000 (4.46%) to £820,000. (This is a slightly smaller increase than in 2026 (4.67%)).

The allocation between dioceses is based on dioceses' quota assessable income. The amount of provincial quota requested from each diocese will therefore vary according to relative changes in its income. The allocation will be:

	2027	2026	Change from 2026	
	£	£	£	
Aberdeen and Orkney	76,014	71,985	4,029	5.60%
Argyll and The Isles	33,210	29,595	3,615	12.21%
Brechin	52,070	50,554	1,516	3.00%
Edinburgh	351,124	334,096	17,028	5.10%
Glasgow and Galloway	152,356	149,464	2,892	1.93%
Moray, Ross and Caithness	56,744	52,438	4,306	8.21%
St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane	98,482	96,868	1,614	1.67%
	820,000	**785,000**	**35,000**	**4.46%**

BUDGET SUMMARY – includes all boards and committees

Actual 2025 £			Budget 2026 £	Budget 2027 £	Budget 2028 £
3,087,360	**General Fund**	Income	2,993,430	**3,093,798**	3,196,482
-		Transitional Stipend Assistance Grants	-	**-**	-
(3,895,311)		Allocated to Boards	(4,071,583)	**(4,132,028)**	(4,052,452)
(807,951)		**Surplus/(deficit)**	(1,078,153)	**(1,038,230)**	**(855,970)**
(358,243)		Balance brought forward	(1,166,194)	**(2,244,347)**	(3,282,577)
(1,166,194)		Balance carried forward	(2,244,347)	**(3,282,577)**	(4,138,547)
2,480,747	**Standing Committee**	Income (From General Fund)	2,826,369	**2,616,157**	2,517,332
(2,480,747)		Expenditure	(2,826,369)	**(2,616,157)**	(2,517,332)
-		**Surplus/(deficit)**	-	**-**	-
-		Balance brought forward	-	**-**	**-**
-		Balance carried forward	-	**-**	-
269,056	**Administration Board**	Income (From General Fund)	298,440	**299,735**	299,735
668,425		Income (other)	584,220	**598,200**	613,906
(854,657)		Expenditure	(762,113)	**(750,853)**	(761,886)
82,824		**Surplus/(deficit)**	**120,547**	**147,082**	**151,755**
(536,132)		Transfer (to)/from capital	369,151	**(366,759)**	(369,399)
879,432		Balance brought forward	426,124	**915,822**	696,145
426,124		Balance carried forward	915,822	**696,145**	478,501
556,726	**Institute Council**	Income (From General Fund)	613,628	**621,682**	627,678
130,563		Income (other)	106,780	**89,599**	91,295
(654,762)		Expenditure	(726,698)	**(711,281)**	(718,973)
32,527		**Surplus/(deficit)**	(6,290)	**-**	-
90,221		Balance brought forward	122,748	**116,458**	116,458
122,748		Balance carried forward	116,458	**116,458**	116,458
809,951	**Mission Board**	Income (From General Fund)	555,076	**568,963**	583,782
253,388		Income (other)	234,334	**241,316**	248,521
(887,461)		Expenditure	(696,876)	**(711,363)**	(726,800)
175,878		**Surplus/(deficit)**	**92,534**	**98,916**	**105,503**
413,435		Balance brought forward	589,313	**681,847**	780,763
589,313		Balance carried forward	681,847	**780,763**	886,266
23,831	**Faith & Order Board**	Income (From General Fund)	23,070	**25,491**	23,925
(23,831)		Expenditure	(23,070)	**(25,491)**	(23,925)
-		**Surplus/(deficit)**	**-**	**-**	**-**
-		Balance brought forward	-	**-**	-
-		Balance carried forward	-	**-**	-
8,784	**Publications**	Income (other)	-	-	-
6,333		Expenditure	-	-	-
15,117		**Surplus/(deficit)**	**-**	**-**	**-**
10,733		Balance brought forward	13,184	13,184	13,184
25,850		Balance carried forward	13,184	**13,184**	13,184
3,087,360	**GRAND TOTAL**	Income (From General Fund)	2,993,430	**3,093,798**	3,196,482
1,061,160		Income (other)	925,334	**929,115**	953,722
(4,895,125)		Expenditure	(5,035,126)	**(4,815,145)**	(4,748,916)
(746,605)		**Surplus/(deficit)**	**(1,116,362)**	**(792,232)**	**(598,712)**
(536,132)		Transfer (to)/from capital	369,151	**(366,759)**	(369,399)
1,035,578		Balance brought forward	(14,825)	**(762,036)**	(1,921,027)
(247,159)		Balance carried forward	(762,036)	**(1,921,027)**	(2,889,138)

General Fund

Budget 2025 £	Actual 2025 £	Variance fav/ (adv) £		Budget 2026 £	Budget 2027 £	Budget 2028 £
			INCOME			
			Investment Income			
2,056,916	2,221,357	164,441	UTP income	2,118,625	2,182,393	2,248,216
15,000	22,769	7,769	Interest	21,000	21,000	21,000
21,704	21,704	-	Net investment property income	-	-	-
2,093,620	2,265,830	172,210		2,139,625	2,203,393	2,269,216
			Administration fees			
5,000	8,507	3,507	UTP / investment administration	5,000	5,000	5,000
37,355	37,355	-	Pension Fund administration	38,625	39,784	40,978
22,125	22,125	-	Restricted Funds	21,975	22,621	23,288
64,480	67,987	3,507		65,600	67,405	69,266
750,000	750,000	-	Quota	785,000	820,000	855,000
3,000	3,503	503	Donations and legacies	3,205	3,000	3,000
-	40	40	Other	-	-	-
2,911,100	3,087,360	176,260	*Total Income*	2,993,430	3,093,798	3,196,482
			ALLOCATIONS			
2,209,573	2,235,747	(26,174)	Standing Committee	2,581,369	2,616,157	2,517,332
296,960	269,056	27,904	Administration Board	298,440	299,735	299,735
648,040	556,726	91,314	Institute Council	613,628	621,682	627,678
573,445	809,951	(236,506)	Mission Board	555,076	568,963	583,782
27,025	23,831	3,194	Faith and Order Board	23,070	25,491	23,925
3,755,043	3,895,311	(140,268)	*Total allocations*	4,071,583	4,132,028	4,052,452
			BALANCES			
(843,943)	(807,951)	35,992	Surplus/(deficit) for year	(1,078,153)	(1,038,230)	(855,970)
(358,244)	(358,243)	1	Balance brought forward	(1,166,194)	(2,244,347)	(3,282,577)
(1,202,187)	(1,166,194)	35,993	*Balance carried forward*	(2,244,347)	(3,282,577)	(4,138,547)

Note
In addition to allocations from the General Fund some Boards / Committees receive income from other sources

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Reflection on and response to the Nairobi-Cairo Proposals

Summary

1. While the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) recognises the need to define the Anglican Communion in a way that reflects the current situation and makeup of the Communion, we have serious reservations about the proposals set out.

- We query the presuppositions that underlie the presentation of the Anglican Communion and its history, on which the proposals seem to be based.
- We are concerned about the suggestion that the language of "historic links with Canterbury" provides an adequate definition of the Anglican Communion.
- Given the liturgical developments since the 1960s, the focus on the Book of Common Prayer (generally taken to be the 1662 English Book of Common Prayer) is no longer sufficient to define what it means to be Anglican (and was in any case always problematic for the Scottish Episcopal Church).
- The lack of a clear definition of the regions of the Anglican Communion is also a concern.
- The proposals for a rotating ACC presidency raise many practical questions which are neither acknowledged nor addressed in the proposals.
- We are dismayed that the expectation that the member churches of a Communion of churches should be in communion with each other seems here to be conceded.
- We fear that the proposals will lead to the formation of a two-tier Anglican organisation, in which some churches view themselves as being in communion with one another, and others view themselves as more loosely associated.

Preamble

2. In 2023, the 18th Anglican Consultative Council passed a resolution (ACC18.3a) affirming "the importance of seeking to walk together to the highest degree possible, and learning from our ecumenical conversations how to accommodate differentiation patiently and respectfully." The resolution further called for the Inter Anglican Standing Commission on Unity Faith and Order (IASCUFO) to "to explore theological questions regarding structure and decision-making to help address our differences in the Anglican Communion," and for "any proposals that may impact the ACC constitution to be brought for full discussion to ACC-19." The Nairobi-Cairo proposals are the fruit of this process. They were initially drafted by IASCUFO at its meeting in Advent 2023, brought to the Primates' meeting in 2024, and revised by IASCUFO in Advent 2024.

3. We recognise that these proposals represent the latest in a series of attempts to find a way forward in the Anglican Communion. Earlier suggestions – the Windsor Report, the proposal for an Anglican Communion Covenant – have not borne fruit.

Tensions within the Anglican Communion have been exacerbated by the growing differences between those who affirm and celebrate both women's ministry and the recognition of same-sex relationships as coherent with biblical faith and an expression of the will of God, and those for whom both these developments are viewed as unbiblical and opposed to the will of God. These discussions have brought to light existing theological tensions within the Anglican Communion, reflecting the wide range of theologies present in the Church of England, and their propagation in different parts of the globe by the different mission societies. Provinces which emerged in areas where the Church Missionary Society was active tend to be more evangelical, whilst those which emerged in areas whether the (United) Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was active tend to be higher church in their practice and theology. Whilst in the Church of England different churchmanships exist alongside each other, with a degree of (albeit sometimes antagonistic) toleration, many Anglican provinces tend to be more theologically and liturgically unified.

4. In our opinion, the Nairobi-Cairo proposals also need to be seen in the context of two much longer-term developments within the Anglican Communion. Firstly, while early Lambeth Conferences could affirm the Book of Common Prayer (generally taken to be the 1662 English Book of Common Prayer) as common to Anglican practice, this is no longer the case. Later Lambeth Conferences encouraged liturgical revision and renewal which was attentive to local context, although many of these revisions have resulted in liturgies which have a strong family resemblance. At the same time, charismatic renewal has in some provinces – or in some local congregations in some provinces – introduced a very different pattern of worship. In addition, changes to the make-up of the Communion, including the membership of the United Churches of North and South India, of Bangladesh and of Pakistan, and of the Lusitanian Church of Portugal and the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Churches, both of which emerged from Roman Catholicism at the end of the nineteenth century, mean that the 1662 Book of Common Prayer is not part of the heritage of all provinces, or of all congregations.

5. Secondly, as Anglican provinces have increasingly – and rightly – moved to training and ordaining their own clergy and appointing their own bishops from amongst that clergy, the leadership of the Anglican Communion has become much more diverse. At the Lambeth Conferences of 1920 and 1930, the vast majority of bishops had been trained in either the UK or North America, and a good number had held appointments in a number of Anglican provinces. This provided a certain coherence and shared culture. As former British colonies became independent in the decades after the Second World War, their Anglican churches also became self-governing, and the leadership of the Anglican Communion became much more disparate and less cohesive. The establishment of the Anglican Consultative Council in 1968 and of the Primates' Meeting in 1978 can be seen as a response to these trends, seeking to enhance communication across the Anglican Communion.

6. In practice, Anglicans have not all been in communion with each other since the 1970s when the first women were ordained, but within the Anglican Communion have found ways of living with these differences. The recognition in some provinces (including the Scottish Episcopal Church) of the God-given nature of

same-sex relationships, the provision of liturgies for the blessing of same-sex relationships or the inclusion of same-sex couples within the definition of marriage, and the ordination of people in same-sex relationships has been rejected by in some provinces of the Anglican Communion as unbiblical. The question of what level of difference is acceptable has recently become more urgent with the nomination of Sarah Mullally as 106th Archbishop of Canterbury. GAFCON has issued a statement in which (some of) its primates announce their withdrawal from the Anglican Communion (declaring GAFCON to be the "true Anglican Communion"); the implication of this for defining the Anglican Communion is not yet clear. The Cairo-Nairobi proposals nonetheless remain on the table, and the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, Anthony Poggo, has encouraged provinces to engage in discussion of them. The Scottish Episcopal Church, which appreciates, values and loves the Anglican Communion of which it is a part, offers these reflections on the proposals from the point of view of a member church of the Anglican Communion whose roots are not in the Church of England.

The Scottish Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion

7. We regret the England-centric perspective on the history of the Anglican Communion as presented in the Nairobi-Cairo Proposals. This ignores the particular history of many of the churches of the Communion, including the Scottish Episcopal Church, and also the Church of Ireland and the Church in Wales. We affirm that "the earliest arrival of Christianity in Britain" included the missions of David in Wales, Patrick in Ireland and Ninian and Columba in Scotland, leading to a vibrant church in fourth and fifth centuries (which can be recognised in the many Scottish saints from this early period). However, the history of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Church in Wales and the Church of Ireland is not rooted in "Pope Gregory the Great's sending of St. Augustine to the Angles in the 6th century." Nor was the Scottish Episcopal Church directly shaped by "the reformation of the Church of England in the 16th century." Indeed, the preamble to the SEC's Code of Canons observes, citing Ian Guild, "The Scottish Episcopal Church," in *The Stair Memorial Encyclopaedia of The Laws of Scotland*, vol. 3: *Churches and Other Religious Bodies* (para 1623): "The SEC is unusual among the Churches of the Anglican Communion in that it lacks any direct historical connection with the Church of England from which it differs in being a product not of the English but of the Scottish Reformation."

8. The Episcopal Church in Scotland emerged from and was shaped by the Scottish Reformation, retaining episcopacy when the Church of Scotland espoused a presbyterian polity. The origins of its theological and liturgical traditions were entirely distinct from those of the Church of England, although their histories have in some periods been intertwined, sometimes very closely. Thus, after the union of the Scottish and English crowns under James VI/I in 1611 and again after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Scottish ministers were consecrated by English bishops to serve as bishops in Scotland. Since at least the mid eighteenth century the two jurisdictions have functioned separately from each other with the Scottish bishops maintaining their own succession, independent of Canterbury. The separation between the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church of England

can be seen in the fact that until 1864 a priest ordained by a Scottish Episcopal bishop could not serve in the Church of England.

9. The liturgy of the Scottish Episcopal Church was influenced by the Laudian Book of Common Prayer which was imposed on Scotland in 1637. This, although it drew on the English Book of Common Prayer of 1559, was more Catholic, not least in retaining an epiclesis in the eucharistic prayer. At the time, it was not well received in Scotland, leading to the National Covenant and the war of the four nations. However, the 1637 Book of Common Prayer was definitive for the Scottish Episcopalian liturgy. Until the nineteenth century, patterns of Scottish Episcopal worship were also heavily influenced by the traditions of the Presbyterian churches in Scotland. The Oxford Movement had a strong influence in shaping the worship of the Scottish Episcopal Church in the nineteenth century, although there have also always been evangelical congregations. The legal status of the 1662 English Book of Common Prayer in Scotland was clarified in 1711, when the House of Lords ruled that it might be used by Episcopalians in Scotland, a decision which was confirmed by an Act of Parliament in 1712 which also mandated toleration of the Episcopal Church in Scotland. However, Scottish liturgies always continued to be used in the Scottish Episcopal Church, including the 1764 Scottish Communion Office, which was based on the 1637 Prayer Book but also showed Orthodox influence. The English Book of Common Prayer (1559/1662) therefore never had the same status in Scotland that it had in England.

10. Similarly, the Thirty-Nine Articles were formally adopted in the Scottish Episcopal Church only in 1804, and their status in Scotland was never entirely clear. That adoption was reversed in 1979 when the Provincial Synod removed any mention of the Articles from Canon 12, "Of Subscription to the Scottish Book of Common Prayer and Promise of Obedience to the Canons and Tribunals of this Church." In its current form, this canon requires clergy and bishops to assent "to the Scottish Book of Common Prayer and of the Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, and to the other authorised liturgical formularies of this Church," and to promise "due obedience to the Code of Canons and to what is lawfully ordered thereunder and to the decisions and judgements of the tribunals of this Church."

11. Notwithstanding the 1712 Act, the Scottish Episcopal Church was suppressed for much of the period between the early 1690s until 1792, largely as a result of the association of Scottish Episcopacy with the Jacobite uprisings. Through the later eighteenth century and nineteenth century, the Scottish Episcopal Church grew; it clarified its governance structures and integrated the qualified Episcopalian chapels (which had understood themselves primarily as English churches in Scotland) into its dioceses.

12. After the American War of Independence, when the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America was seeking the consecration of an American bishop, the Scottish bishops, who were not required to swear an oath of loyalty to the British monarch, were – with the approval of the Archbishop of Canterbury – able to ordain him. On 14 November 1784, Samuel Seabury was consecrated in Aberdeen by the Scottish bishops Robert Kilgour (Aberdeen; Primus), Arthur Petrie (Ross & Moray), and John Skinner (coadjutor bishop of Aberdeen), with the support of Charles Rose (Dunkeld) to serve as the first bishop of the Protestant Episcopal

Church of the United States of America. Seabury was the first Anglican bishop to serve outwith the jurisdiction of the crown. The Scottish Episcopal Church notes with some pride that this consecration is often held to mark the beginning of the Anglican Communion.

13. At the same time, the very existence of the Scottish Episcopal Church from the sixteenth century is a reminder that the Church of England has never been the only episcopal church in the British Isles. Since the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and the Church in Wales, there have been four Anglican jurisdictions in the British Isles, three of which do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Today all four would see themselves as being in communion and recognising each other's ordained ministries.

14. The Preamble to the SEC Code of Canons recognises the distinct identity of the SEC, observing: "It is unclear how far the principles which may be distilled from the law of the Church of England, the Codes and practices of other Churches of the Anglican Communion or ... the universal 'Canon Law' form part of our 'Custom'." It is, therefore, to use the language of the Nairobi-Cairo Proposals, an autonomous church, and a church that recognises itself as being in communion with the Church of England, and thus with the See of Canterbury. However, it is a church which historically has a very complex relationship with the Church of England, and which would be reluctant to define itself as having "historic links" to the See of Canterbury. Indeed, such a revised definition might well require a revision of the preamble to the Code of Canons.

Summary of the Nairobi-Cairo Proposals

15. The Nairobi-Cairo Proposals begin with a brief overview of recent developments in the Anglican Communion. They ask: "How should we think about the faith and order of the Anglican Communion, in view of persistent disagreement and division between and within our churches?" And they consider whether the Anglican Communion still reflects "an anachronistic colonial culture" and whether "adjustments" could be made "to encourage a more sustained equality, mutuality, and flourishing of all member churches." These questions they see as "both distinct and intertwined."

16. In answering these questions, the Nairobi-Cairo proposals turn to the definition of the Anglican Communion formulated at the 1930 Lambeth Conference, which both "set the terms ... for the last century of Anglican attempts at agreement, accountability, and even provisional decision-making" and "anticipated some of the challenges the Communion has faced." They then consider what it means to describe the Anglican Communion in terms of the marks of the church: one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

17. One: Recognising the disunity within the Anglican Communion, and the danger of prizing independence over interdependence, the proposals highlight the importance of "receiving and working toward the highest degree of communion possible," and focusing on "perseverance amid disagreement about important questions of orthodoxy and ethics, on the way to a commonly discerned holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity of the one Church of Christ."

18. Holy: while the proposals recognise that Anglicans "differ profoundly about aspects of holy living," they affirm that Anglicans "can recommit themselves to finding holy ways of handling differences and divisions": accordingly, "all should be prepared to serve and honour the other, even when distance or differentiation may be needed, as an implication of our commitment to making room for each other." To do so is to offer "a remarkable witness to the power of Christ to bring unity in a divided world."

19. Catholic: there is a real need for "arguments about theology and practice" not to give rise to "communities ranged over against one another." Rather, the Anglican Communion needs to live out its long-held conviction that "persistent difference, disagreement, and even division can be contained by the Church, and by communions within her, in a key of patient love."

20. Apostolic: this section focuses on the structures of the Anglican Communion. It notes that the Archbishop of Canterbury has no powers to play an "enhanced role" in the Anglican Communion, since this "would contravene the equality and mutuality of the 42 member churches of the Communion." It recognises also that that a church can be in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury without being – or becoming – a member church of the Anglican Communion: this is the case for the full communion partners of the Church of England. The current process for joining the Anglican Communion is set out in Article 7.2 of the ACC Constitution: "with the assent of two-thirds of the Primates of the Anglican Communion (which shall be deemed to have been received if not withheld in writing within four months from the date of notification) the Standing Committee may alter or add to the Schedule."

Proposals

21. Finally, two specific proposals are offered:

    (A) a revision of the 1930 definition

    (B) a proposal for a broadened leadership of the Lambeth Conference, Anglican Consultative Council and Primates' Meeting.

22. (A) The revised definition of the Anglican Communion reads:

    The Anglican Communion is a fellowship, within the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, of those duly constituted dioceses, provinces or regional Churches, which have the following characteristics in common:

    a. they seek to uphold and propagate the Catholic and Apostolic faith and order as they are generally set forth in the Book of Common Prayer as authorised in their distinct Churches;

    b. they are autonomous, and, as such, promote within each of their territories a local expression of Christian faith, life and worship; and

    c. they are bound together through their shared inheritance, mutual service, common counsel (of bishops and others) in conference, and historic

connection with the See of Canterbury, by which they seek interdependently to foster the highest degree of communion possible one with another.

We make this statement praying for and eagerly awaiting the time when the Churches of the present Anglican Communion will enter into full communion with other parts of the Catholic Church not definable as Anglican in the above sense, as a step towards the ultimate reunion of all Christendom in one visibly united fellowship.

23. This proposed revision to the 1930 definition

    (i) removes references in that definition to the provinces and member church of the Anglican Communion being "in Communion with the See of Canterbury", replacing this with the language of having a historic connection with the See of Canterbury.

    (ii) describes members churches not as "particular or national" but as "autonomous".

    (iii) asserts that the member churches "seek to uphold and propagate the Catholic and Apostolic faith and order as they are generally set forth in the Book of Common Prayer as authorised in their distinct Churches" rather than that they "uphold and propagate it".

    (iv) affirms that member churches are "bound together through their shared inheritance, mutual service, common counsel (of the bishops and others) in conference, and historic connection with the See of Canterbury, by which they seek interdependently to foster the highest degree of communion possible one with another.

24. (B) The second proposal is

    (i) to introduce a rotating presidency of the ACC between the five regions of the Communion, elected from the membership of the Primates' Meeting by that meeting; and

    (ii) for the Primates' Standing Committee to play a part in the calling and convening of both Primates' Meetings and the Lambeth Conference.

Comments on the theological rationale and the proposals

Theological discussion

25. Notwithstanding our objections to the historical presentation of the developments of Anglican Communion, overall, we find that the Nairobi Cairo Proposals offer a helpful exploration of what it means for the member churches of the Anglican Communion to consider themselves part of the one, holy and apostolic Church. We recognise here many learnings from the ecumenical processes in which Anglicans, including Scottish Episcopalians, have engaged. We particularly welcome the strong call to continue to walk together despite disagreements, and the affirmation that this is itself an important witness.

26. We are less convinced that this discussion offers an adequate exploration of what it means to be Anglican. We are concerned that comprehensiveness seems to be elided with catholicity. We are also unconvinced by the way that apostolicity is here read primarily in terms of structures, with little consideration of what faith these structures are intending to propagate and teach. It might be helpful here to reflect on the role of a bishop as defined in Anglican ordinals: teaching the faith, care of clergy and congregations, preserving the unity of the church, and leading the church in mission.

27. Canon 17.2 of the Scottish Episcopal Church maintains that "The teaching of the Scottish Episcopal Church is grounded on revelation and reason, on the Holy Scriptures and the Fathers." Anglican theology and practice are, and always must be, rooted in and informed by scripture, reason, and tradition. We welcome and affirm the statement in the Pastoral Letter issued by the Archbishop and Bishops of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui:

> Without tradition and reason, we cannot hope to understand scripture more deeply. Without scripture and reason, tradition becomes performative orthodoxy. And without scripture and tradition, reason alone will not be enough to lead us to God, and our faith will become no better than mere human ideology, easily swayed by secular trends.

28. Moreover, we are concerned that there is no explicit engagement with the current situation of the Anglican Communion. In particular, we note that the Anglican Consultative Council is defined by its Constitution (according to English law) as being made up of a particular set of churches. However, with the recent statement by GAFCON, some of those churches which are defined in the ACC constitution as members churches of the Anglican Communion are currently saying that they are not members of the Anglican Communion as defined by the ACC and are claiming that they themselves now constitute the Anglican Communion. This situation complicates any proposals which are seeking to take forward a definition of the Anglican Communion based on the ACC, and we would submit that this needs to be acknowledged.

29. In addition, there is a lack of clarity in these proposals about the status of churches that claim to be Anglican but are not currently recognised as member churches of the Anglican Communion, such as ACNA.

30. Regrettably, the Nairobi-Cairo Proposals appear to concede that the churches of the Anglican Communion should not be expected to be in communion with each other. This would appear to be setting up an Anglican Federation rather than an Anglican Communion. However, there will still remain a group of churches that are in communion with one another through their being in communion with Canterbury as defined in their own Canons and other foundational documents.

Proposal (A): revision of the 1930 definition of the Anglican Communion:

31. A. (ii) The proposal to make explicit the autonomous status of the member churches and provinces of the Anglican Communion seems a helpful formulation compared to "particular or national" churches.

32. A. (iii) (a) The proposal to amend "upholds" to "seeks to uphold" the apostolic faith presumably reflects a more cautious understanding of the relationship between lived reality and eschatological aspiration that that held and expressed in 1930. We regret this amendment but recognise that it reflects the inevitably partial nature of our faith in this world.

33. A. (iii) (b) Given the extent of liturgical revision across the Anglican Communion since 1930, of it seems somewhat surprising that some adjustment was not made to the reference to the Book of Common Prayer in this paragraph. This is a particular issue for the SEC given the complexity of its history with the English Book of Common Prayer, discussed above. We wonder whether most Anglicans today would intuitively look to the 1662 English Book of Common Prayer to define their faith, although some Anglican provinces have a modern Book of Common Prayer. We found the reference to the faith of the Anglican churches being "founded in the holy Scriptures, nurtured by our sacramental life, and set forth in our formularies, prayer books, canons, and ecumenical agreements" very helpful and regret that it was not used here also.

34. A. (i) and (iv) While recognising that the language of "in Communion with Canterbury" has for some time been aspirational rather a description of reality, and recognising too that churches can be in communion with Canterbury without being members of the Anglican Communion, we are cautious about the replacement of this terminology by a reference to "a historical connection with the See of Canterbury." This language could apply to churches which are not Anglican (such as the Methodist churches). It also sits uneasily with churches such as the Scottish Episcopal Church which do not have their roots in the Church of England, but are nonetheless in communion with Canterbury. It is unclear how it could be deemed to apply to churches like the Lusitanian or Spanish Reformed Episcopal churches, which had no "historic connection to the See of Canterbury" at the time that they joined the Anglican Communion, although that historic connection has now evolved.

35. Moreover, Canon 15 of the SEC's Code of Canons provides that "The Scottish Episcopal Church recognises as in full communion with itself the Churches of the Anglican Communion." That is, the SEC Canons use the language of being "in full communion" with the Church of England, and thus with the See of Canterbury. We would expect that other member churches of the Anglican Communion will also have such language in their canons. The proposed change to language of the member churches of the Anglican Communion having a "historic connection to the See of Canterbury" is thus in danger of creating a two-tier a two-tier Anglican organisation, in which some churches view themselves as being in communion with one another, and others view themselves as more loosely associated.

36. We find that the expectation that members of the Anglican Communion will participate in the structures of the Anglican Communion and engage with each other might have been more strongly emphasised in this proposal. This appears to be the principle that underlies the affirmation that the churches of the Anglican Communion "seek interdependently to foster the highest degree of communion possible one with another," but this could have been strengthened by adding a phrase such as "through engagement with and attendance at the Lambeth

Conference, Anglican Consultative Council, the Primates' Meeting and other Anglican structures and networks, as well as through direct relationships with other provinces."

Proposal B: Structural proposals

37. B. (i) The suggestion that there be a rotating presidency of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting is plausible and would involve the different regions of the Anglican Communion in the leadership of the Communion at the highest level. We note that this reflects the pattern of leadership successfully implemented in the other world communions such as the Lutheran World Federation.

38. However, we have many questions about how it is proposed that this should be resourced, recognising the significant economic disparity between the different regions of the Communion. The Archbishop of Canterbury's staff at Lambeth are currently responsible, in consultation with the Anglican Communion Office, for much of the work relating to the Anglica Communion. A number of questions therefore arise. For instance, would the ACC President have an office and staff which moved geographically with the Presidency, or would the ACC President be supported by – and have a voice in appointing – relevant staff at Lambeth Palace? How would the ACC President relate to the Anglican Communion Office?

39. We note also that the five regions are not currently defined in the ACC constitution. As defined for the received procedures for electing the Archbishop of Canterbury, the regions are held to be Africa, the Americas, the Middle East and Asia, Oceania, and Europe. We note that in the recent election of the Archbishop of Canterbury the Europe region was deemed to include the provinces of the British Isles other than England, represented by the Right Reverend Mary Stallard, Bishop of Llandaff.

40. The proposed changes would clearly require a substantial change to the ACC constitution, particularly but not only to paragraph 7.1. We would urge that the revised constitution should not only include a definition of the procedures for electing or appointing the ACC President, but also set out the ACC President's responsibilities and the extent of the ACC President's powers. The question of who is responsible for the appointment of the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion would also need to be clarified.

41. B. (ii) We welcome the suggestion that the Primates' Standing Committee take a role in convening both the Primates' Meetings and the Lambeth Conference. We note that this is effectively already happening, and it seems eminently sensible to make their involvement explicit. We would value clarification also of how the Primates' Standing Committee and the Primates' Meeting relate to the preparation and organisation of the meetings of the Anglican Consultative Council. Again, the question of how this work is to be resourced needs to be clarified.

Conclusion

42. We recognise the need to take seriously the impaired communion that exists within the Anglican Communion and to offer proposals which engage with and emerge from that situation. However, we note with considerable regret that (at least for the SEC) this means that the level of communion experienced with some of the members of our own global church family is recognised to be less that that we enjoy with some of our ecumenical partners. The appeal to a baptismal ecclesiology as the basis for relationships within the Anglican Communion effectively means an acceptance that not all member churches are in a relationship of communion. We are deeply saddened by the decision by some bishops and primates of the Anglican Communion to refuse to receive communion with or from others. We would welcome a strong commitment by the member churches of the Anglican Communion that they will receive communion with and from one another, as a sign of a commitment to continue to walk and talk together in the journey of faith, even as they continue to wrestle with their deep differences. We find that the Nairobi-Cairo Proposals do not engage sufficiently with the current fractured situation of the Anglican Communion. Neither do they take seriously the complex historical relationship of the SEC with the Church of England and the see of Canterbury.

Prepared for the Scottish Episcopal Church
by the Inter-Church Relations Committee and the Faith and Order Board,
in consultation with the SEC ACC delegates.

1 December 2025

Response to the Supplement to the Nairobi-Cairo Proposals

Preamble

1. The SEC welcomes the clarifications and the engagement with the responses submitted, including our own.

2. We recognise and acknowledge the need to reflect on and update understandings of the Anglican Communion, and to acknowledge how relationships within the Anglican Communion have shifted and changed. We remain convinced that it is important to articulate a vision of the Anglican Communion as churches in communion. Indeed, this is the definition in our own canons, where the member churches of the Anglican Communion are listed first in the category of churches which "The Scottish Episcopal Church recognises as in full communion with itself" (Canon 15.1.a).

3. We remain surprised that neither the original Nairobi-Cairo Proposals nor the supplement articulates a coherent theological view of tradition beyond 'discernment of bishops', historical or otherwise. We would also expect tradition and reason to be named alongside Scripture as sources of authority for Anglicans. We recognise the interplay between Scripture reason and tradition as an important Anglican hermeneutic.

4. We would urge that the attempt to "shed some of the baggage of colonialism while celebrating a shared theological and sacramental inheritance" include recognition of and serious engagement with the range of different ways that member churches have come into the Anglican Communion. Our original response summarised the history of the Scottish Episcopal Church and its (often complex and painful) relationship to the Church of England, which included the suppression of the SEC by the British establishment (including both the Church of England and the Church of Scotland) after the Jacobite risings of 1715 and 1745 with the destruction of its church buildings, the banning of its clergy, and subsequently the denial by the Church of England of the validity of SEC orders until the mid-19th century. That history, however, also includes the request to the Scottish bishops that they consecrate Samuel Seabury in 1784 as the first Anglican bishop to serve outside the British Isles, a significant step in the establishment of the Anglican Communion.

5. The SEC's history illustrates how this particular member church chose – despite some very significant difficulties – to maintain and deepen its relationship to the Church of England and to other churches of the Anglican Communion. Long term, communion was able to transcend and reconcile these deeply broken relationships. Despite this often difficult history, the SEC is joyfully and affirmatively a member of the Anglican Communion and wishes to remain so.

Proposal 1 – definition of the Anglican Communion

6. The Supplement maintains the proposal to define the Anglican Communion without change. The issues highlighted in our previous response have not been addressed. On the basis of that response, we would suggest the following amendments to the proposed text:

The Anglican Communion is a fellowship, within the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, of those duly constituted dioceses, provinces or regional Churches which, affirming their historic connection with the See of Canterbury,(1) have chosen to enter into and remain in mutual relationship of communion with one another.(2) They have the following characteristics in common:

they seek to uphold and propagate the Catholic and Apostolic faith and order as they are ~~generally set forth in the Book of Common Prayer as authorised in their distinct Churches~~ founded in the holy Scriptures, nurtured by our sacramental life, and set forth in our formularies, prayer books, canons, and ecumenical agreements;(3)

they are autonomous Churches, and, as such, promote within each of their territories a local expression of Christian faith, life and worship; and

they are bound together through their shared inheritance, mutual service, common counsel (of the bishops and others) in conference, ~~and historic connection with the See of Canterbury~~, by which they seek interdependently, through commitment to one another and engagement with the instruments of Communion,(4) to foster the highest degree of communion possible one with another.

We make this statement praying for and eagerly awaiting the time when the Churches of the present Anglican Communion will enter into full communion with other parts of the Catholic Church not definable as Anglican in the above sense, as a step towards the ultimate reunion of all Christendom in one visibly united fellowship.

(1) We believe that it would be helpful to retain a mention of the See of Canterbury in the opening section. We recognise the reasons for moving away from the language of being “in communion with the see of Canterbury” but would emphasise that the SEC canons include “the Churches in the Anglican Communion” first in the list of churches with which the SEC is in Communion (Canon 15.1.a). Other member churches may be in the same situation. Our canons thus define the Anglican Communion as churches with which the SEC is in communion.

(2) The emphasis on choice and mutual commitment is an affirmation that the shaping of the Anglican Communion was not a pre-determined process, but is the fruit of choices by the member churches.

(3) We find that this formulation, drawn from the original NCP, expresses much better the range of elements which constitute Anglicanism today. It avoids the incorrect claim (expressed in the original 1930 definition) that the BCP has been foundational for all Anglican churches, recognising that for some member churches, such as the Lusitanian Church of Portugal and the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church, and to some extent the SEC, the BCP has never been in regular use. It also avoids the problem that the term “the Book of Common Prayer” means different things in different contexts: thus in TEC the BCP refers to the 1979 liturgy, while in the English context it generally refers to

the 1662 BCP in contrast to *Common Worship*, and in Scotland it may refer to the Scottish BCP of 1637, or sometimes to the Scottish BCP of 1929, in contrast to the SEC's 1982 or 1970 Liturgies. It avoids suggesting that the BCP remains foundational for all Anglicans, recognising the reality that many Anglicans today will never have experienced the use of a 17th-century Book of Common Prayer in worship.

(4) We would want here to emphasise that interdependence arises from mutual commitment. We also maintain that it is important to mention in the definition the expectation that member churches will engage constructively with the Instruments of Communion.

Proposal 2 – Structures of the Anglican Communion

7. We find that the revised proposals to the structures offer useful clarifications and further thinking.

8. The Proposals suggest that the 'regional primates' will have a considerably enhanced role. This makes it even more important that the five regions are reviewed and properly defined in the ACC constitution, with clarity about how the chairs of regions are selected. In particular, there will need to be clarity about the position of the chair of the Europe region (British and Irish Anglican churches) and the relationship of the holder of that position to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

9. The proposed abolition of the office of President of the ACC (which until now has been the Archbishop of Canterbury by virtue of that office) would enable an elected lay or ordained person to be the unambiguous representative of that body as Chair, potentially amplifying the input of lay people on crucial Communion matters. We fully support this change.

10. The disparity of resources between the different regions has to some extent been acknowledged in the Supplement, but further thought needs to be given to this aspect and to how the proposed revisions to the structures of the Anglican Communion and its leadership will be funded and resourced.

Further reflections

11. In preparing this further response, members of the SEC's Faith and Order Board and its Inter-Church Relations Committee had valuable discussions about the current state of the Anglican Communion and the contribution made to our church by those who move to Scotland from elsewhere in the Communion. We believe that it is important in revising the definition of the Anglican Communion to acknowledge that should a member church choose no longer to be a part of the Anglican Communion, then it is free to leave. This does not constitute a schism, but should be understood as a recognition that a particular phase of a relationship between that church and the Anglican Communion has come to an end.

12. We believe, although with considerable sadness, that it is necessary to define the point at which a church must be recognised to have left the Anglican Communion, and to define how that decision can be made. We ask ourselves, for instance, at

what point do the dioceses of such a church cease to be included in the Anglican Cycle of Prayer?

13. We would welcome guidance as to the consequences if and when a member church chooses to leave. In particular, what is the status of that church's clergy should they move to another province which remains within the Anglican Communion? Can a "safe to receive" still be requested from a church that has left the Anglican Communion? We ask for this clarification, recognising that these questions are not new, and that procedures already exist relating to the reception of members and clergy from ACNA churches and other continuing Anglican churches into Anglican Communion churches.

A note on the drafting process of this response

14. The original response of the Scottish Episcopal Church was drafted by the Inter-Church Relations Committee (ICRC) at the request of the Faith and Order Board, in consultation with the Doctrine Committee and in consultation with the former and current SEC delegates to ACC. The current delegates had participated in the briefing sessions about the Nairobi Cairo Proposals and contributed insights from those sessions.

15. This response was prepared by a subgroup of the ICRC in consultation with the former and current SEC delegates to ACC. It was discussed at and amended by the Faith and Order Board, and finalised by the ICRC in April 2026 for transmission to the ACO. Both responses will be presented to and discussed at General Synod in June 2026 and the following resolution will be proposed:

That this Synod:

a) strongly affirms its commitment to and membership of the Anglican Communion. It recognises that, in accordance with Canon 15.1.a., the churches of the Anglican Communion constitute the primary group of churches with which the SEC is in communion.

b) recognises and affirms the need to revise the definition of the Anglican Communion set out in 1930, to acknowledge the changes in the Communion and the need for the leadership of the Communion better to reflect the breadth of the Communion.

c) While supporting these proposals in principle, requests its delegates to ACC 19 to ask for amendments to the proposals set out in the Nairobi Cairo Proposals and in the Supplement to those proposals, in accordance with the SEC responses to those proposals prepared by the Inter-Church Relations Committee at the request of the Faith and Order Board and submitted to IASCUFO in December 2025 and to the Anglican Communion Office in April 2026.

Prepared for the Scottish Episcopal Church
by the Inter-Church Relations Committee and the Faith and Order Board,
in consultation with the SEC ACC delegates.

12 May 2026

Shared buildings, shared worship and covenant partnerships between congregations of the SEC and other denominations in Scotland

In the changing landscape of Christianity in Scotland, and particularly as the Church of Scotland restructures, SEC congregations and charges are increasingly finding themselves working more closely together with congregations of other denominations. We recognise and welcome these developments as an opportunity for ecumenical witness and to engage in God's mission together. However, we also recognise that working together involves practical questions. This paper seeks to provide guidelines for a range of different scenarios, with a focus on working with churches listed in schedule 2 to Canon 15, and especially the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church of Great Britain, and the United Reformed Church.

These guidelines are intended to facilitate working together, providing structures which help churches to live out their relationship together to the full.

Working together can take many forms. This paper considers five options:

a) Hosting a congregation of another denomination to hold regular services in a place of worship owned by the SEC, or as an SEC congregation being hosted to hold regular services in a place of worship owned by another denomination;

b) Regular shared worship and shared ministry with a congregation of another denomination;

c) Single Congregation LEPs;

d) Covenant Partnerships in Extended Areas: this extends the single congregation LEP principles to a wider geographical area;

e) Shared ministry: one ordained minister is serving congregations of two (or more) denominations.

Each of these situations will require that the congregations and those with oversight over the congregations involved come to agreement on a range of issues. It is recommended that this agreement be put in writing.

The ICRC is collating sample agreements relating to each of these options which can be made available on request.

a) Hosting a congregation of another denomination to hold regular services in a place of worship owned by the SEC, or as an SEC congregation being hosted to hold regular services in a place of worship owned by another denomination[1]

This is the case when an SEC congregation is providing a congregation of another denomination with opportunities to hold services in a place of worship owned by the SEC, or an SEC congregation is hosted for their services in a place of worship owned by another denomination. This is not worship shared between two congregations. Such arrangements may be one-off, short-term, or long-term. The diocesan bishop should be informed about any short- or long-term arrangements.

[1] Many of the points raised in this section apply also to the use of SEC premises by groups of other faiths, or by secular groups. It is always wise to have a written agreement in place.

A written use-of-building agreement should normally be in place for both short- or long-term arrangements. Such an agreement will take different forms depending on the context and time-frame.

A use-of-building agreement should include the following points:

1. Constitutional status

   The agreement should state the parties involved in the use-of-building agreement.

2. Ownership of the building.

   This section should cover:

   - ownership of the building.
   - who is responsible for its maintenance and upkeep, and/or how these responsibilities will be shared.

3. Building use

   This section should cover:

   - agreed regular times of use by the guest congregation for worship, nurture, business and social activities.
   - the mechanism for making bookings for additional use of the building.
   - the use of electronic systems and musical instruments.

4. Caretaking

   This section should cover:

   - arrangements concerning keyholders and loss of keys.
   - cleaning duties.
   - expectations around tidying up at the end of services and meetings.
   - arrangements for keeping the building secure.
   - the mechanism for reporting problems and breakages.
   - the storage facilities available to the guest party.
   - the noticeboard facilities available to the guest party and to the host.

5. Health & Safety Issues

   This section should cover:

   - an agreement about how health and safety policies, (including fire risk assessments) will be implemented in the local context.
   - an agreement about how safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policies will be implemented in the local context.

- an agreement about how additional denominational specific policies and good practice guidelines may be implemented in the local context
- the arrangements concerning the insurance of the building, its contents, public liability and employer's liability.

6. Restrictions

This section should cover:

- any restrictions on the use on the building.
- any restrictions on activities which may occur within the building e.g. gambling, consumption of alcohol, the bringing of domestic animals into the building.
- sensitive consideration of the policies of one party which may not be those of another, e.g. if one party is designated a 'fair trade church' or an eco-congregation.

7. Financial arrangements

This section should cover:

- any arrangements put in place for financial upkeep of the building by the guests.
- the methods and timing of payments.
- the method and timing of the review of these payments.

8. Amendments and trouble-shooting

This section should cover:

- the mechanism for reviewing the use-of-building agreement.
- the timing of such reviews.
- grievance procedures should any problems arise.

9. Agreement

This section should make provision for:

- the Agreement to be accepted by each party involved.
- the Agreement to be formally signed and dated by each party involved.

Practical points to consider in drawing up such an agreement:

- Check that your insurance covers the guests. (It probably does.)
- Check your risk assessment covers the guests and make sure they are aware of it.
- Check in writing your guests have appropriate PVG clearance for what they are going to be doing. "Are you observing the law regarding safeguarding?"

- If your guests are contributing to refreshments check someone among them has an appropriate food hygiene certificate.
- Your church is likely to have licences relating to music copyright (CCLI), other music licences, IT, and digital ministry. Some of these are premises-based and some are organisation-based. Make sure you know which are which, and that the guest congregation either holds or is covered by relevant licences.
- Check that any agreement about a payment or contribution to costs will not trigger a business rate assessment with your local council. A request to contribute based on operating costs (electricity, heating, cleaning) is unlikely to lead to an assessment. However, local authorities have different policies and can change their positions, especially if under financial pressure.
- If your church has a public entertainments licence, from the local authority, this is usually a licence for the buildings and land. It may therefore be extendible to a guest congregation, with some conditions. These will include compliance with Planning, Building Regulations and Food Safety Legislation. Check the detail and be aware that local authorities may vary.
- Occasionally churches own buildings or land which were gifted to them with conditions which expressly limit use to one denomination or congregation. Many such limitations were legally removed some years ago, but others are still in force. If you think you work under such limitations, take legal advice.

b) Shared worship and shared ministry with a congregation of another denomination

One scenario is that everything carries on as before and the other congregation joins in.

If there is to be joint worship:

- Agree what you hope to do together, discuss what the expectations of shared worship are. It may be helpful to take some time together to explore the traditions of worship in each other's churches, including the use of authorised liturgy or of prayers written by the minister, musical traditions, and the frequency of communion services. Such discussions can become a journey of mutual discovery and enrichment and can help congregations to move into deeper relationship with one another.

For shared services taking place in places of worship belonging to the SEC:

- Shared services with congregations of churches in Schedule 2 (which in Scotland means the Church of Scotland, Methodist Church in Great Britain and the United Reformed Church) should take place in accordance with the provisions of Canon 15, paragraphs 2 and 5. These provide that:
    1. Clergy or authorised lay people may give addresses, lead prayers and worship, and assist in the distribution of Holy Communion in services in

the Scottish Episcopal Church, in the same way that they are authorised to do this by their own Church.

2. Clergy of the other church may preside at a service of Holy Communion in a charge in the Scottish Episcopal Church; this service should be advertised as a communion service of the other church. There should not be concelebration (i.e. shared praying of the eucharistic prayer/words of institution).
3. If shared worship is to be a regular occurrence, then the names of clergy or authorised lay people who will be involved in leading it should be notified to the bishop, who should give written permission.
4. Be aware that the partnering denominations may have different levels of flexibility.

- Shared services with congregations of churches not in Schedule 2 should take place in accordance with the provisions of Canon 15 paragraph 3. This provides that:

  A bishop may grant permission for a minister or lay person who is a member of a Trinitarian church with which the SEC has no formal agreement:

  - to say or sing Morning or Evening Prayer
  - to read the Holy Scriptures at any service
  - to preach/give an address at any service
  - to lead intercessory prayers
  - to assist at baptisms, marriages and funerals
  - to assist in the distribution of Communion.

  The bishop should be satisfied that the minister or lay person is authorized to perform a similar duty in his or her own church.

  In this case only an SEC priest should preside at the Eucharist at a service in a place of worship owned by the SEC.

- If regular services are planned, it is recommended that this agreement be put in writing, taking into account the points raised under point (a).
- The practical considerations under (a) may also apply.
- Check your guests have appropriate PVG clearance for what they are going to be doing.
- Remember that if someone from another denomination will be leading worship for more than five Sundays in any given year, they will need to apply to the diocesan bishop for permission to officiate.

If SEC congregations are joining in worship in places of worship belonging to other denominations, the stipulations in canons 15.2 and 15.3 may be helpful in establishing what involvement in leading worship is appropriate for SEC clergy and members of SEC congregations. This will however be subject to the rules and canon law of the host congregation.

For occasional ecumenical services, a formal agreement is unlikely to be needed, but the points raised under (a), especially those relating to insurance, music and other copyright licenses, may pertain and should be checked.

c) Single parish Local Ecumenical Partnerships or Ecumenical Parishes

Canon 15.4 provides:

> LOCAL ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP OR ECUMENICAL PARISH
>
> Notwithstanding the further provisions of this Canon, where one or more Congregations of other Trinitarian Churches are closely associated in mission with a congregation of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the General Synod may, at the request of the Synod of the Diocese of which the said Episcopalian congregation is part, approve the creation of a Local Ecumenical Partnership or Ecumenical Parish, within which members of participating congregations will be welcome to share in the Eucharist in each other's congregations under the presidency of any of the duly ordained clergy of those congregations who have received the requisite authority of their own denomination to preside at the Eucharist, subject always to the pastoral oversight and canonical authority of the Bishop of the Diocese.

In this case, there will normally be one joint congregation with shared sacramental ministry, common finances and an Ecumenical Church Council. These arrangements will be formalised through a Constitution specific to that LEP.

There may be a ministerial team, drawn from all or some of the partner denominations. Some of the ministers may have pastoral responsibility for other congregations (which may be LEPs or single denomination), and others may serve full time in the LEP. In many cases ordained ministry will be provided primarily by one of the partner denominations, often in an agreed alternating pattern.

Aspects of the life and worship of each tradition should be reflected in the Constitution. The mix of partners will have an influence on the worship style of the Partnership. It is important to remember that churches evolve, so a mix of recognisable denominational worship and ecumenically inspired forms will be appropriate.

The LEP must be formally recognised by each of the partner denominations. Local decision-making will take place through an Ecumenical Church Council and the Church Meeting. Formal approval for a Single Congregation Partnership must be sought from the appropriate denominational authorities. The national Ecumenical Officers or other appropriate person should be consulted and the documentation agreed by the participating denominations and the National Sponsoring Body.

Single Congregation LEPs may develop out of the formal coming together of two or more congregations. Others may take the form of ecumenical church plants, for instance when in a new housing development several denominations combine to 'grow' a congregation.

d) Covenant Partnerships in Extended Areas: this extends the LEP principles to a wider geographical area

A Covenant Partnership in an Extended Area may take different forms:

- in some areas, the congregations of the participating churches will normally worship in their own places of worship, retaining their own vestries/kirk sessions/church councils, but sharing ministry;
- in other areas, the congregations will worship together regularly, and may share a place of worship;

In either scenario:

- a Covenant Partnership in an Extended Area is a voluntary commitment which does not merge local congregations, which remain distinct, retaining their own constitutions and financial arrangements, and does not compromise their rights;
- individual congregations continue to be accountable to the SEC bishop on one hand, and the appropriate structures of oversight in the other church(es) on the other;
- ordained clergy and ministers are appointed by their respective churches, and continue to be subject to their own church's discipline;
- shared worship and sacramental ministry will be governed on the SEC side by canons 15 and 16 (see section b above).
- the churches and congregations which enter into a Covenant Partnership in an Extended Area commit themselves to undertake shared mission, worship and learning. Mutual eucharistic sharing is encouraged. The partner churches pledge to develop joint decision making, especially in developing a joint mission strategy, and also a joint strategy for the deployment of ministry within the area.
- Covenant partners also commit themselves to authorise ministers of the churches involved to conduct worship in each other's places of worship according to the regulations of their church, including baptism and the eucharist.
- Appropriate structures of consultation and planning will need to be developed in order to work out these commitments in practice, recognising that they will need to be adapted in response to the developing relationship.
- On the SEC side, the bishop, all the vestries and incumbents of the SEC charges in the area would need to affirm the covenant statement, as would the local congregations and those with oversight in the other church(es) involved. The Covenant Partnership in an Extended Area will then comprise all the congregations and charges that have given their approval. If a significant number of congregations and charges in the designated area do not approve, the proposal is likely to be impractical.

NOTE: Canon 13.3 stipulates: "No Bishop shall institute any cleric to an Incumbency or Joint Incumbency until such cleric has produced Letters of Orders, showing that cleric to have been episcopally and canonically ordained, and such testimonials as the Bishop may require." This precludes the appointment of a CofS, Methodist or URC minister to an SEC incumbency.

e) Shared ministry: one ordained minister serves congregations which belong to two (or more) different denominations

Points to be considered:

- Due to the canons requiring episcopal ordination for those who preside at an SEC Eucharist and become incumbents in the SEC (canon 13.3), it is possible for SEC clergy to be authorised to serve in the Church of Scotland, Methodist Church of Great Britain, and United Reformed Church in a way that the clergy of those churches cannot currently be authorised to serve in the SEC.
- Depending on the regulations of the partner denomination(s), SEC clergy who hold such joint appointments may thereby become subject to the authority structures and disciplinary processes of both the SEC and the partner denomination(s). There will need to be clarity about this, and – if it pertains – discussion of the implications of this in terms of attending (for instance) diocesan synods and relevant meetings in the partner church.
- SEC clergy who hold joint appointments may reasonably expect that they will be required to undergo a period of training or induction into the processes of the other church.
- SEC clergy who hold joint appointments are likely to be required to complete PVG procedures also for the other denomination.
- To the extent that it is possible for clergy of other denominations to hold licenses in the SEC, they should expect to attend training in SEC procedures and to complete SEC PVG procedures.

NOTE: Here too the provision of Canon 13.3 would preclude the appointment of a CofS, Methodist or URC minister to an SEC incumbency.

DIGEST OF RESOLUTIONS

Motion 19: Gender-Inclusive Language in the Digest of Resolutions

Synod is invited to approve the use of gender-inclusive language throughout the Digest of Resolutions.

Background

The Digest has been compiled and amended over a number of years, and its language reflects a range of drafting conventions. A review of the text has identified:

- a small number of instances of explicitly gendered language (for example, "by writing under his own hand or duly authorised by him" (Section 1.2), and references to a Convener's "his pendant Committees" (Section 3.2.2));
- instances where roles are described using masculine pronouns (for example, references to the Secretary General being notified or receiving nominations submitted to "him"); and
- more frequent use of binary constructions (for example, "he/she" or "his/her").

The motion proposes a revision to replace gender-specific language with gender-neutral alternatives and to replace binary constructions with gender-inclusive language.

The motion makes clear that these revisions do not alter the meaning or effect of any provision.

The proposed revisions would bring the Digest into line with current drafting practice and support consistency in the language used across governance documents.

Motion: That this Synod approves the revision of the Digest of Resolutions to adopt gender-inclusive language throughout the text, such revisions not altering the meaning or effect of any provision.

This shall include:

- replacing gender-specific language (such as "he", "him", or "his") with gender-neutral equivalents; and
- replacing binary constructions (such as "he/she" or "his/her") with gender-inclusive alternatives where appropriate.

Dr Dee Bird
Secretary General

ELECTIONS

Trustees of the Scottish Episcopal Church

Since the General Synod is an unincorporated association, it does not enjoy legal personality and cannot hold property in its own name. Accordingly, the Digest of Resolutions (1.2) provides for the appointment of Trustees as a means of enabling this. (The Digest also allows for the mechanism of a nominee company and Scottish Episcopal Church Nominees exists for this purpose and is currently the usual means for the Synod to hold property (eg retirement housing)). Some property acquired at an earlier stage remains in the name of the Trustees.

The current Trustees are:

Rt Rev David Chillingworth
Mr Robert Gordon
Mr Martin Haldane
Prof Patricia Peattie

Until his death recently, Canon Dr John Ferguson-Smith was also a Trustee. Synod is invited to fill the vacancy by electing the Rt Rev Dr John Armes, retired Bishop of Edinburgh.

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RULES OF ORDER OF THE GENERAL SYNOD

(Amended 12 June 1997, 7 June 2012, 12 June 2014, 11 June 2022, 8 June 2023)

1. Application

These Rules of Order shall apply to the proceedings of the General Synod whether sitting as one body or in separate Houses of Bishops, other Clergy and Laity.

2. The Chair – Powers and Duties

Deference shall at all times be paid to the authority of the Chair. All points of order shall be addressed to the person occupying the Chair, stated briefly and audibly, and raised immediately the perceived irregularity occurs, otherwise the person occupying the Chair shall disallow them. Points of order shall not introduce new subject matter. Speeches shall not be allowed on points of order. Where, in the view of the person occupying the Chair, the matter raised does not constitute a point of order, the person occupying the Chair shall rule accordingly. On all points of order the ruling from the Chair shall be final and not open to discussion. When the person occupying the Chair rises to speak, any member of the Synod who is addressing the meeting shall sit down.

It shall be the responsibility of the person occupying the Chair to preserve order and secure that members obtain a fair hearing, to decide all matters of order arising at meetings of the Synod and to decide, if two or more members rise in their places, which to call to speak. In the event of disorder arising at any meeting of the Synod, the meeting may be adjourned by the person occupying the chair who shall also, then or subsequently, fix a time for its reconvening. Quitting the Chair in such circumstances shall, without further procedure, have the effect of a formal adjournment of the meeting.

3. Order of Debate

Members desiring to speak shall indicate their desire to do so in the manner directed by the person occupying the Chair, or in the absence of any other direction, by raising their hand. Those called upon to speak shall address the Chair. Speeches shall be directed to the motion or amendment being proposed, seconded or otherwise under discussion or to a question of order. No member shall be allowed to speak more often than once on any subject under discussion, save on a point of order or, with consent of the Chair, to make an explanation, but the mover of a motion shall have a right of reply. A member who is speaking when a question of order is raised shall stop speaking until the question of order has been decided by the person occupying the Chair.

4. Matters Taken in Private

The Synod may decide by a majority of those present and voting that:-

(a) any business shall be taken in private;

(b) the Synod shall go into Committee for the informal discussion of any subject;

(c) the Synod shall go into groups for the informal discussion of any subject (in which case minutes of such informal discussion need not be taken).

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Chair shall have power to direct that the Synod shall break into small groups, for a period not exceeding 10 minutes, for the informal discussion of any subject (in which case minutes of such informal discussion need not be taken).

5. Adjournment

(a) Any meeting of the Synod may be adjourned to such other place, time or day and hour as may be set by the person occupying the Chair.

(b) Any meeting of the Synod may be adjourned to a later time on the same day and such an adjournment may be made on the direction from the Chair, or failing such direction, on the motion of any member, the vote on which motion, on being seconded, shall without amendment or discussion be taken by a show of hands as one House.

6. Quorum

The Quorum of the Synod shall be one half of the eligible membership of the House of Clergy and of the House of Laity and not less than three members of the House of Bishops, but no business shall be invalid because transacted without a quorum being present, unless the attention of the Chair has been called to the absence of a quorum. The person occupying the chair shall then ascertain, in such a way as seems fit, that no quorum is present, and declare the fact. This shall be a responsibility of the person occupying the chair, whose declaration, whether or not a quorum is present, shall be final. If it has been declared from the Chair that no quorum is present, no business shall be transacted until a quorum is declared from the Chair to be present except: (a) the consideration of a motion to adjourn; (b) such non-contentious business as the meeting, with consent of the person occupying the chair, sees fit to transact. If, however, a division is challenged on any subject other than on a motion for adjournment, the same shall not be dealt with by the meeting. No motion for adjournment shall be submitted until at least fifteen minutes after the declaration from the Chair that a quorum is not present, except with the consent of the person occupying the Chair.

7. Obstructive or Offensive Conduct

(a) In the event of any member at any Synod meeting disregarding the authority of the Chair, or being guilty of obstructive or offensive conduct, a motion may thereupon be moved and seconded to suspend such member for the remainder of the sitting. The motion shall be put without discussion.

(b) The person occupying the Chair shall warn any member of the public who interrupts the proceedings at any meeting. If that member of the public continues the interruption the person occupying the Chair shall order the person concerned to leave the meeting, and not return.

8. Duration of Speeches

The mover of a motion shall not speak for more than ten minutes except with the consent of Synod. All other speakers taking part in the discussion on the motion or amendment shall not normally speak for more than five minutes, subject to the discretion of the person occupying the Chair. The mover of the original motion shall have the right to speak for five minutes in reply but shall not introduce any new matter into the debate. Thereafter the discussion shall be held closed and the question shall thereupon be put from the Chair.

9. Motions

(a) The Synod shall consider only the following motions:-

(i) motions which have been included in the agenda and papers for that meeting;

(ii) motions which the Synod has agreed to consider in terms of Rule 10;

(iii) formal or procedural motions.

(b) All motions and amendments shall be stated, immediately on their being proposed to the meeting, by the mover, before being spoken to. All motions under Rule 9 (a) (ii) and all amendments shall be submitted in writing, signed by the mover and seconder and delivered to the Secretary General immediately on being moved.

(c) Every amendment shall be relevant to the motion on which it is moved. A motion may be amended by the mover with the consent of the meeting, which consent shall be by the majority of those present and voting. In the case of a motion emanating from a Diocesan Synod or from a Board or Committee of the General Synod, the mover of that motion shall have the power, unless specifically denied it by the body from which the motion has emanated, to accept the amendment to that motion, thus altering the text of the motion on which the Synod is asked to vote.

(d) A motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the mover with the consent of the seconder of the motion or amendment, but the Synod shall have power by simple majority of those present and voting to refuse to allow such withdrawal, in which case the motion shall stand.

(e) Motions or amendments which are not seconded shall not be discussed or inserted in the minutes.

(f) If a member who has submitted a notice of motion is not present to move the motion, the motion shall fall, unless Synod agrees that another member may move the motion.

(g) No motion of any kind which involves a grant of money shall be competent unless it is printed in the programme of business with the observations of the Board or Committee within whose budget the grant would fall, with power to the Chair on special occasions to take the sense of the meeting with reference to matters appearing in the programme of business and, if satisfied, to dispense with the necessity of observations by the appropriate Board or Committee. Except as above provided, no motion (other than votes of thanks) shall be entertained unless notice has been given to the Secretary General in reasonable time to enable it to be entered in the programme of business, unless the person occupying the Chair sees fit to put the question to the meeting that want of notice shall be dispensed with and interprets it as the evident sense of the meeting that this be allowed. There shall be no poll on the question, but a show of hands may be taken to assist in coming to a decision.

(h) In circumstances where the Standing Committee wishes to place a different option or options on the agenda for the Synod's consideration, it shall have power to include on the agenda two or more motions which are alternative or contradictory to one another and in such cases shall state that the counter-motion procedure set out in Rule 10(e) below shall apply. In any such case, the counter-motion procedure shall apply, so that the motion appearing first on the agenda shall be considered the original motion and any further motion or motions shall be regarded as if they were Rule 10 motions for the purposes of applying the counter-motion procedure and as if they had been received in the order in which they are placed on the agenda.

10. Rule 10 Motions

(a) Notice of Rule 10 motions should normally be given in writing (to the Secretary General) at least seven days before Synod starts.

(b) The motion shall be in writing, and signed by the mover and seconder, and supported by no fewer than twelve members (excluding the mover and seconder of the motion) of Synod who must be present at the meeting at which it is intended to move the motion. The support of each of such twelve (or more) members should normally be evidenced either:-

(a) by their confirming such support, at least seven days before Synod starts, by providing to the Secretary General a copy of the motion bearing their signature; or

(b) by their confirming such support, at least seven days before Synod starts, in writing to the Secretary General, and by thereafter providing to the Secretary General, no later than the start of Synod, a copy of the motion bearing their signature.

(c) The mover of a motion under this Rule shall be given the opportunity to address Synod briefly (maximum of two minutes) as to why the Synod should consider the motion at that time before a vote is taken on whether the Motion should be considered.

(d) Subject to any contrary provision in the Code of Canons, in order for a Rule 10 motion to be considered by Synod, a two thirds majority of those present and voting shall vote in favour of its being considered.

(e) If, in the opinion of the Convener of the Standing Committee, a Rule 10 motion comprises a counter-motion (as defined in paragraph (f) below) to a motion which has been included in the agenda for the meeting in question, and if a two thirds majority as required by the immediately preceding paragraph (d) has been achieved, the following procedure shall apply:-

(a) the Synod shall first consider and vote on any amendments to the original motion;

(b) the Synod shall then consider and vote on any amendments to the Rule 10 motion or motions;

(c) once all such amendments have been dealt with, a vote shall be taken between the motions (that is the original motion included in the agenda (as amended by any amendments accepted by the Synod)) and the Rule 10 motion(s) (as amended by any amendments accepted by the Synod) in the order in which the motions were made, beginning with the first. Synod members may vote for one motion only. If, on the results being announced, one motion has obtained a clear majority of votes, the other motion (or all other motions, as the case may be) shall fall; but if no motion has obtained a clear majority, the motion having the smallest number of votes shall be struck off and votes shall be taken between the remaining motions until all remaining motions have been disposed of;

(d) once the number of motions under the procedure set out above has been reduced to one, the Synod shall consider that remaining motion and vote on it.

(f) A counter-motion is a motion which is contradictory or negative of a motion which has been included in the agenda for the meeting or of a substantial part of such a motion. A counter-motion therefore differs from an amendment to a motion because an amendment is not substantially contradictory of the original motion but makes deletions, alterations or additions without defeating the main object of the original motion).

11. Motion: “That the Question be now put”.

(a) The amendment called “The previous question” shall not be allowed.

(b) It shall be competent for any member who has not spoken on the question before the meeting to move “that the question be now put”. On this being seconded, if it seems to the person occupying the chair that the question before the meeting has been sufficiently discussed, a vote shall be taken, without amendment or discussion. If the motion is carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right to reply, and the question under discussion shall then be put to the meeting. If the motion “that the question be now put” is not carried, a similar motion may be made after every three additional members have spoken.

12. Voting

(a) After the question on which the vote is to be taken has been announced, and voting has commenced, no member shall be permitted to offer an opinion, or ask a question, except on a point of order, or otherwise interrupt the proceedings until the result of the vote has been intimated.

(b) Save as otherwise provided, all motions and amendments shall be passed by a majority of the members of the Synod present and voting.

(c) The person occupying the chair shall have a deliberative but not a casting vote.

(d) When the question is put to the vote, tellers shall be named from the Chair and shall give in their report of each division taken. Except where otherwise stated in these Rules of Order, the vote may be taken in the first instance on a show of hands, the result, in the opinion of the person occupying the chair, being declared therefrom. In all cases of doubt the vote shall be taken by counting the hands held up. On any question, if one third of the present and voting members of any House so wish, voting shall be by ballot.

(e) When voting by Houses, the Houses must meet separately if one third of the present and voting members of any House so wishes. When the Synod votes by Houses, the numbers of the vote in each House shall be recorded, and a majority of those present and voting shall be required in each House for the passing of the motion.

(f) A challenge to the accuracy of the minutes shall be made by way of amendment to the motion that the minutes be approved. Only those members who were present at the previous meeting to which the minutes relate shall be entitled to vote on the said amendment.

13. Election, Selection or Appointment of Members to Office

In the case of election, selection or appointment by Synod of a member of the Synod or of any other person to any office where the number of candidates nominated exceeds the number of vacancies, the member or person to be elected, selected or appointed as the case may be, shall be determined by a vote (or votes) by ballot in (each of) which members will be entitled to vote for as many candidates as there are vacancies. No member may record in the ballot more than one vote for any candidate. The candidate or candidates having the highest number of votes shall be declared duly elected. If there is equality of votes for the last vacancy, this shall be resolved by ballot or by a show of hands.

14. Assessor

The Standing Committee of the General Synod shall nominate an assessor, who may be a member of the Synod, but the assessor shall intervene as assessor only on the call of the Chair, without prejudice to the right of the assessor when a member of the Synod to speak and vote as such.

15. Suspension of Rules

The application of any or all of these Rules of Order may be temporarily suspended or amended by a majority amounting to two-thirds of those present and voting. Voting shall be as one House.

16. Amendment of Rules

Any or all of these Rules of Order may be amended by a majority amounting to two-thirds of those present and voting. Voting shall be as one House.

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RULE 10 MOTIONS: PRACTICE NOTE

Before considering presenting a motion Synod members are encouraged to liaise with the Secretary General in order to consult with the Board to whom the matter will be delegated if the motion is passed. It is expected that in a majority of cases this will result in a co-operative response where the matter is taken on to the Board's agenda, and the need for a Rule 10 Motion will pass. Most matters can be dealt with using this process during the year through consultation with the relevant diocesan representative.

GENERAL SYNOD: A REFLECTION ON MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER

You make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy (Psalm 65.8)

Within the daily rhythm of life, we become aware, when day breaks and when night falls, of moments of significance. A day begins and a day ends, never to return. Time has moved on during that day, and we have drawn a little nearer to whatever our end will be. Tomorrow will be another day, with a significance of its own. It will not be merely a repeat of today, no matter how many similarities there may be. Each day thus comes to us as a distinctive gift. We do not make it. We can only receive it. We may learn to receive it with gratitude and to return thanks for it to the God of creation, the giver of life.

Every day will I bless you
and praise your name for ever and ever. (Psalm 145.2)

Thus it is that human beings, whatever their religious persuasion, have instinctively offered prayer at each day`s beginning and ending. At daybreak, prayer expresses gratitude for the passing of the night and for the gift of the new day. It offers to God all that is to be done and experienced as the day runs its course. At nightfall, prayer again expresses gratitude for what the day has brought and invites reflection on our use or perhaps misuse of it, entrusting our lives once again to God`s care during the hours of darkness.

Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. (Luke 11.2)

Prayer becomes part of the rhythm of life, of waking and sleeping, of working and resting. The sun and the moon, as time`s markers, bring the further seasonal rhythms of winter and spring, summer and autumn. All these rhythms lead us to celebrate and reflect on the mystery of life itself, of our waking to life and of the coming sleep of death. Faith leads us further, to see in the passage from light to darkness and from night to morning an image of Christ`s surrender to death and, with his being raised from death, the promise of a new creation, the goal towards which all our labours, as people of faith, are directed.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances,
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5.16f)

Morning and Evening prayer thus form the frame within which the activities of each day take place. They are the beginning and the ending of each day`s work. When, for example, the General Synod of our Church meets, Morning Prayer begins the day`s business and Evening Prayer brings it to a conclusion. Both express the context of faith which informs the entire work of Synod. Both offer us the opportunity to draw deeply on the words of the sacred writings (psalms, canticles, readings and prayers) and allow them to become the voice of our own prayer.

“[The Psalms] are the bright mirror in which we become more deeply conscious of what is happening to us”. (Cassian, conferences X,11)

Both Morning and Evening Prayer are there, not as optional extras for the piously inclined, but as the means by which we are reminded, as we begin and as we end the business of Synod, of the heart of the matter: the God through whom, in whom and for whom we exist.

“He prays unceasingly who combines prayer with necessary duties and duties with prayer. Only in this way can we find it practicable to fulfil the commandment to pray always. It consists in regarding the whole of Christian existence as a single great prayer. What we are accustomed to call prayer is only a part of it.” (Origen, On Prayer)

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES/ORGANISATIONS

There follows a list of current representatives appointed to represent the Scottish Episcopal Church on a variety of other bodies and organisations.

Most positions are held by volunteers but in a few cases the SEC is represented by staff members and the list is annotated to show this.

Vacancies arise from time to time in the positions in question and if you have an interest in serving in any of the areas in question, please make your interest known to the General Synod Office.

Dr Dee Bird
Secretary General
May 2026

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH
REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES/ORGANISATIONS – MAY 2026

Body/Organisation	Representative	Appointing Body	**Start Date*** *No Fixed Term Date
ANGLICAN COMMUNION			
Anglican Consultative Council	Dr Beth Routledge Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth	Standing Committee	2023-32 2024
Anglican Communion Standing Committee	Primus (alternate member)	Primates Meeting	2022*
Anglican Communion Networks and Commissions: -			
Family Network	Laura Symon	Mission Board	2025
Environmental Network	Alan Werritty	Mission Board	2003*
Women's Network	Ley-Anne Forsyth	Mission Board	2020*
Inter-Anglican Liturgical Commission Working Partly on Church Calendars	Rev Canon Dr Nicholas Taylor	Liturgy Committee	2021*
Inter-Anglican Liturgical Commission Working Group on Formation	Dr John Davies	Liturgy Committee	2021*
Anglican Communion Science Commission	Bishop of Brechin as Episcopal Link	College of Bishops	2022*
ACTS (Action of Churches Together in Scotland)			
Trustee Board	Paul Goldfinch	Faith and Order Board	2015
Members' Meeting	Primus Rev Canon Professor Charlotte Methuen (Alternate) Miriam Weibye[1]	College of Bishops Faith and Order Board	2017 2016
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND			
Ecumenical Relations Committee	Rev Prof Charlotte Methuen	Inter-Church Relations Committee	2021-2026
COUNCIL OF THE CHURCH SERVICE SOCIETY	Rev Christoph Wutscher	Liturgy Committee	2021
CTBI (Churches Together in Britain and Ireland)			
Senior Representatives Forum	Dr Dee Bird[2]	*ex officio* Secretary General	2024
DIACONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND	Rev Norma Higgott	Faith and Order Board	2016*

[1] Church Relations Officer appointed as third SEC Representative. The position is non-voting. Officer presence helpful because of general overview of ecumenical relations.

[2] The Forum comprises senior denominational officers *ex officio*.

Body/Organisation	Representative	Appointing Body	Start Date* *No Fixed Term Date
GLENALMOND COUNCIL	Primus	*ex officio* College of Bishops	2014*
INTERFAITH GROUP ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	Hilary Moran	Church in Society	
INTERFAITH SCOTLAND	Rev Gerry Dillon	Interfaith Relations Committee	2026*
MEISSEN COMMISSION (Celtic Churches Observer)	Rev Dr Maurice Elliot	Church of Ireland	2021
MISSION TO SEAFARERS	Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane	College of Bishops	2019*
PORVOO CONTACT GROUP	Miriam Weibye[3]	Inter-Church Relations Committee	2016*
REUILLY CONTACT GROUP	Rev Canon John McLuckie	Inter-Church Relations Committee	2016*
SCOTTISH CHRISTIAN FORUM			
Scottish Church Leaders' Forum	Primus	College of Bishops	2024*
Ecumenical Officers' Forum	Miriam Weibye	Inter-Church Relations Committee	2024*
SCOTTISH CHURCHES COMMITTEE	Peter Sharp Dr Dee Bird[4]	Admin Board	2024* 2024*
SCOTTISH CHURCHES COMMITEE SAFEGUARDING GROUP	Christine Riddoch - TBC	*Ex officio*	2026*
SCOTTISH CHURCHES PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE			
Coordination Group	Miriam Weibye	Church in Society	2020
Holyrood Group	Catriona Beel	Church in Society	2023*
SCOTTISH FAITHS ACTION FOR REFUGEES	Rev Nick Bowry	Church in Society	2019*
SCOTTISH PILGRIM ROUTES FORUM	Rev Dr Paul Singh	Mission Board	2023*
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES ASSEMBLY	Miriam Weibye One other	Faith and Order Board	
WORLD DAY OF PRAYER (Scottish Committee)	Vacant	College of Bishops	

[3] Officer well placed within the denomination to act as liaison point with the Porvoo Communion.

[4] Much of the agenda of the Committee deals with issues of a legal/regulatory nature. The two SEC representatives have traditionally comprised one officer and one other.