

THE PRINCIPAL
ACTS
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE



CONVENED AT EDINBURGH, MAY 2020
WITH THE
MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THAT ASSEMBLY
AND THE
MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMISSION
OF THE PREVIOUS ASSEMBLY

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, THE MOUND, EDINBURGH
(Scottish Charity Number: SC012925)

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CLASS 1 ACTS – ACTS WHICH HAVE PASSED THE BARRIER ACT**Act 1 – Dissolution of Provincial Synods**

Number 1 of Class 1

*Category: Governance**Tuesday 6th October 2020*

The General Assembly, noting that annual statutory meetings of Provincial Synods have been suspended since 2009 General Assembly, and that the reduced number of Presbyteries in the Church has resulted in this tier of Church government becoming largely redundant, and desiring therefore that Provincial Synods be dissolved and removed from the governmental structure of the Church, ordain as follows with the consent of Presbyteries:

1. ***Dissolution of Provincial Synods.*** The General Assembly, noting that statutory meetings of Provincial Synods have been suspended since the 2009 General Assembly, and that Provincial Synods no longer have a meaningful purpose in the government of the Church due to reduction in the number of Presbyteries over the years, declare that Synods be dissolved with no prejudice to the review procedures regarding Complaints and Appeals, Petitions, and References.

2. ***Review Procedures.*** The General Assembly declare that the business of reviewing matters from Presbyteries now be directed to the Commissions of Assembly and finally to the General Assembly. They instruct that all future meetings of the Commissions of Assembly be empowered to receive appeals, complaints, petitions and references from individuals and from the lower courts of the Church.

2.1 The General Assembly declare that the procedure for the submission of papers, etc., regarding references, appeals, complaints, and petitions be such that these be forwarded to the Principal Clerk of Assembly for inclusion in the business of the Assembly or its Commissions. They instruct the Principal Clerk to bring all such papers to the attention of the Assembly Business Committee who will bring a recommendation to the Assembly or to its Commissions on the acceptability and relevance of all papers.

2.2 The General Assembly declare that the final decision regarding the reception of papers, etc., associated with references, appeals, complaints, and petitions will rest with the Assembly and its Commissions and that it shall be competent to submit amendments to the Committee's proposal at the time at which its report is taken up for consideration.

2.3 The General Assembly affirm that in general terms, the findings of the Commissions of Assembly are final and not subject to appeal. However, they declare that, in the case of Complaints and Appeals, Petitions, and References, it shall be competent for parties in the review process to appeal to the General Assembly.

3. ***Examination of Records.*** The General Assembly instruct that Presbytery records be submitted for examination to the General Assembly Business Committee annually by 31st March. They instruct the Business Committee to examine the records at its annual April meeting and to report on the examination to the next General Assembly.

4. ***Financial Arrangements.*** The General Assembly instruct all Synods to meet in order to make suitable arrangements for the allocation of funds held in the name of the Synod.

4.1 ***General Funds.*** The General Assembly direct that, where monies are held in a general account in the name of the Synod, such funds be divided equally between the Presbyteries of the Synod.

4.2 ***Bursary Funds.*** The General Assembly further direct that, where funds are held by the Synod in restricted funds such as bursary accounts and grant-aid accounts, Synods make suitable arrangements for the administration of such fund by the Central Offices of the Church. They instruct the Central Offices to arrange the dispersal of such funds according to the terms of the deeds of the funds. They also instruct the Central Offices to ensure that bursaries or grant aid are advertised to students in Edinburgh Theological Seminary and any others who are engaged in post-graduate studies who may qualify for financial support from the terms of the bursaries or grants.

4.3 ***Reporting.*** The General Assembly instruct each Synod to report to the Assembly Clerks' Office on the completion of the financial re-arrangements set out in Paragraph 4.1 and 4.2 and to do so not later than 31st December 2020. They instruct the Assembly Clerk to report accordingly to the next General Assembly.

5. ***Dissolution.*** The General Assembly declare that Provincial Synods be dissolved and that the provisions of this Act are implemented as soon as possible after the rising of the 2021 General Assembly.

6. **Repeal.** The General Assembly repeals all Acts of the General Assembly relevant to the constitution of Synods, the re-organisation of Synods and to general meetings of Synod.

CLASS 2 ACTS – ACTS WHICH ARE OF GENERAL INTEREST TO THE CHURCH

Act 2 – Regarding Exceptional Arrangements for the 2020 General Assembly and Presbyteries

Number 1 of Class 2

Category: General Assembly

Monday 18th May 2020

1. The General Assembly, noting the Government restrictions on travel and public gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, declare that the Assembly shall convene to take up urgent and time-critical business using the Zoom audio-visual technology platform.
2. The General Assembly declare that the Assembly shall convene for one session only on Monday 18th May 2020 at 6.00pm. They further declare that the General Assembly will adjourn on Monday 18th May 2020 to meet again on Tuesday 6th October 2020 at 9.00am in the Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, and to rise not later than 1.00pm on 8th October 2020. They empower the Moderator and the Principal Clerk, in consultation with the Business Committee, to make alternative arrangements should the current restrictions on social distancing and public gatherings still apply.
3. The General Assembly, noting the benefits of continuity in the role of Moderator at this time, and taking cognisance of the uncertainty regarding the Assembly meeting for normal business in this year, appoint Rev. Donald G. Macdonald, Moderator of the 2019 General Assembly, as Moderator of the 2020 General Assembly. They thank Mr Macdonald for his willingness to continue in the role of Moderator for a second year.
4. The General Assembly note that Rev. Neil MacMillan has been elected Moderator-Designate of the 2020 General Assembly. They declare that Mr MacMillan's election shall be valid for the purposes of appointing the Moderator of the 2021 General Assembly.
5. The General Assembly declare that the need for the submission of Elders' Certificates according to the terms of Act 8, 1853 as amended by Act 9, 1863, be waived for the 2020 Assembly in the light of the current COVID-19 crisis and its impact on meetings of Church courts.
6. The General Assembly instruct the Assembly Clerks to examine the records of Boards and Committees and to report on this, and the examination of Presbytery records, to the October 2020 meeting of the Assembly.
7. The General Assembly declare that all ministerial appointments which are due for review in May 2020 be extended under the current terms until the 2021 General Assembly.
8. The General Assembly further declare that the fixed terms of all ministers on the Rolls of Ministers according to Act 8, Class 2, 2019 be extended until such time as revised and updated arrangements are approved by the 2021 General Assembly.
9. The General Assembly instruct Presbyteries to proceed with the appointment of Moderator and the election of Representative Elder at Presbytery and Synod according to the terms of Act 1, Class 1, 2019 and to do so with reference to 18th May 2020, the date on which the 2020 General Assembly will adjourn to meet again on 6th October 2020.

Act 3 – Amending Act 2, Class 1, 2020 regarding the Membership of the Judicial Commission

Number 2 of Class 2

Category: Governance

Monday 18th May 2020

The General Assembly ordain that Paragraph 1.1 of Act 2, Class 1, 2020 regarding the Judicial Commission and its composition and membership be revised to read as follows:

The Judicial Commission shall be appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation in the first instance of the Committee to Review Disciplinary Procedures and thereafter on the recommendation of the Board of Trustees. The Judicial Commission shall be comprised of 24 members, two ministers and two elders from each of the home Presbyteries, appointed for a term of four years, renewable annually by the General Assembly for a subsequent four-year term. Those appointed shall be senior ministers and elders of the church with at least 10 years' experience of active service. The General Assembly shall appoint one of the members of the Judicial Commission as Chairman.

Act 4 – Repealing Act 5, Class 2, 1968 regarding the Clerk of the Training in the Ministry Committee

Number 3 of Class 2

Category: Governance

Monday 18th May 2020

The General Assembly repeal Act 5, Class 2, 1968 which states that the Clerk of the Training of the Ministry should be a minister. They declare that all future appointments to the clerkship shall be on the basis of gifts and experience suited to the post and that the appointment shall be according to the terms and conditions for the appointments of clerks to Boards and Committee current at time.

Act 5 – Use of Technology in Exceptional Circumstances

Number 4 of Class 2

Category: Governance

Monday 18th May 2020

The General Assembly, recognising the need to make use of audio-visual technology in the carrying out of Church business in exceptional circumstances, enact and ordain as follows:

1. *General Principles.* The General Assembly declare that the following general principles apply for the purposes of this Act.

1.1. The General Assembly declare that exceptional circumstances for the purposes of this Act are circumstances where, due to restrictions on public gatherings imposed by the Government or other legislative authority, Presbyteries are unable to meet physically in one location to constitute a meeting in the normal way.

1.2. Where such exceptional circumstances exist, a Kirk Session may proceed to appoint a congregational meeting to elect a minister to fill a vacancy, and a Presbytery may proceed to hold a meeting to moderate a call, license a student, and conduct an induction or an ordination using audio-visual technology without the need for people to be physically present in one location.

1.3. Such a meeting will be governed by the principles in Act 33, Class 2, 2010 – Use of Modern Technology in Conducting Church Business alongside the additional principles outlined in this Act.

2. *The Signing of the Formula.* The General Assembly declare that, where, during a meeting of Presbytery conducted using audio-visual technology, a person is required to answer the Questions and sign the Formula the following procedure will be used.

2.1. The Clerk will provide the person with a copy of the Formula in PDF in advance of the meeting.

2.2. The Moderator will ask the person the Questions via videoconferencing at the appropriate time during the meeting.

2.3. On giving satisfactory answers to the Questions, the Moderator will then instruct the person to sign the Formula.

2.4. The person will show the unsigned Formula to the Camera.

2.5. The person will sign the Formula on Camera.

2.6. The person will show the signed Formula to the Camera.

2.7. The signed Formula will then be posted to the Presbytery Clerk.

3. *Congregational Meetings to Elect Minister.* The General Assembly declare that, in exceptional circumstances, Kirk Sessions of a vacant congregation may proceed to appoint a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing a minister to fill the vacancy using audio-visual technology.

3.1 The Kirk Session shall meet using audio-visual technology to consider steps to filling a vacancy in the congregation. If they consider the time is right for this, they will appoint a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing a minister.

3.2 The Kirk Session will give due intimation of the congregational meeting to all communicant members and supporting adherents and shall ensure that they are all informed of the meeting and of its purpose.

3.3 The Kirk Session shall explain to members and adherents that the meeting will take place using audio-visual technology. They shall ensure that arrangements are made for members and adherents who do not have access to audio-visual technology to connect with the meeting using landline or mobile telephone. They shall issue a separate document explaining how to join the meeting and how to participate in the meeting for the purposes of the election.

3.4 At the congregational meeting, the Moderator will call for nominations to fill the vacancy in the usual way. Communicant members and supporting adherents will show their support of nominations when asked to do so either by raising their hand and keeping their hand raised until such time as the Moderator and Clerk have recorded the number of votes, or by the use of the polling function when this is available on the audio-visual platform in use at the time. Communicants and adherents participating in the meeting using landline or mobile telephone will declare their support verbally.

3.5 On the successful completion of the election process, and on there being a clear majority support for one nomination to fill the vacancy, the Kirk Session shall decide to ask the Presbytery to moderate in a Closed Call.

3.6 The Kirk Session shall report to the Presbytery on the congregational meeting, giving details of the process of informing all communicant members and adherents of the meeting and also giving details of the process of informing the regarding participation in the meeting.

4. *Meetings to Moderate a Call.* The General Assembly declare that, where a Congregation requests Presbytery to Moderate in a Call, and Presbytery agrees that exceptional circumstances exist, the Presbytery shall conduct the meeting to moderate the call via audio-visual technology.

4.1. The Presbytery shall receive a report from the Kirk Session and shall satisfy itself that the steps outlined in Section 3 above have been followed without any detriment to the rights of the people in electing a minister. The Presbytery shall record its satisfaction with this report before proceeding to appoint a meeting to moderate in a Call.

4.2. In order for a meeting to Moderate a Call to be conducted by audio-visual technology, the call must be a Closed Call with the name of the Minister or Probationer agreed and elected by the congregation and inserted in the Call.

4.3. A form of Mandate should be prepared and circulated to each communicant member of the congregation and any adherents who wish to sign the Concurrence in Call.

4.4. The Form of Mandate shall authorise one of the Elders of the congregation to sign the Form of Call or the concurrence in Call on behalf of the member or adherent.

4.5. During the meeting to Moderate the Call there should be a facility for the Presbytery to meet apart from the wider congregation (either a separate conference or placing the congregation on Hold while the Presbytery meeting).

4.6. The Kirk Session will submit to the Presbytery written confirmation that every communicant on the Roll has had the opportunity to complete a mandate form before the Presbytery proceeds to moderate in the Call. The Kirk Session shall also report on the opportunity given to adherents and regular worshippers in the congregation to sign a mandate for concurrence in the Call.

- 4.7. The meeting to Moderate the Call will be conducted as normal via audio-visual technology.
- 4.8. At the point where Members and Adherents would normally be invited to sign the Form of Call or the Concurrence in Call, the Elder authorised to sign mandates will sign on behalf of all members and adherents who have granted authority to do so.
- 4.9. The Presbytery shall consider the Call and, if they decide to sustain the call, the Presbytery Clerk will report to the Congregation and call for any dissents which can either be made via the technology or if some members of the congregation are merely watching a live-stream a telephone number of the Presbytery Clerk can be provided for dissents. If the Presbytery Clerk provides a telephone number for dissents, they must wait 5 minutes before proceeding in case there are any delays in the technology.
5. *Licensing.* The General Assembly declare that, where exceptional circumstances exist, a Presbytery may decide to conduct the Licensing of a candidate to preach the Gospel via audio-visual technology.
- 5.1. The Presbytery may carry out both the trials for licence, and the Presbytery meeting to license the candidate, via audio-visual technology.
- 5.2. The Presbytery shall carry out the trials licensing process in line with the recognised practice with meetings conducted according to the general principles outlined in Section 1 above.
- 5.3. On successful completion of the trials for licence, the Presbytery will proceed to the signing of the Formula in accordance with the procedure outlined in Section 2 of this Act.
6. *Inductions.* The General Assembly declare that, where exceptional circumstances exist, a Presbytery may decide to proceed with the induction of a minister using audio-visual technology.
- 6.1. The Presbytery shall proceed with the induction service according to the Church's recognised practice with two exceptions:
- 6.2.1. Firstly, when the Presbytery Clerk reads the Second Edict calling for anyone who is prepared to substantiate objections to the life or doctrine of the Probationer or Minister, he shall provide a telephone number for the raising of any objections and wait 5 minutes before proceeding in case there are any delays in the technology.
- 6.2.2. Secondly, asking of the Questions and signing of the Formula will be conducted in accordance with the procedure outlined in Section 2 of this Act.
7. *Ordinations.* The General Assembly, notwithstanding the fact that the laying on of hands is an essential element in the Church's current process for ordination to the office of the holy ministry, declare that in exceptional circumstances it shall be competent for Presbyteries to proceed as follows:
- 7.1. When the Presbytery has sustained a Call to a Probationer according to the process outlined in Section 3 of this Act, the Presbytery may decide to proceed with the ordination process with the use of audio-visual technology.
- 7.2. The Presbytery shall then follow the procedure outlined in Section 5 of this Act with regard to trials for licence for students for the purpose of completing the trials for ordination.
- 7.3. The induction service will be carried out as outlined in Section 6 of this Act.
- 7.4. Having satisfactorily answered the Questions and signed the Formula, the Presbytery shall proceed with the prayer and declaration of ordination after which the person is formally inducted to the congregation and granted a seat in the Presbytery.
- 7.5. As soon as possible after the exceptional circumstances have ended and the Presbytery is able to meet in the normal way, they shall conduct a service of dedication when the Moderator will lead the Presbytery in prayer and when they will lay hands on the individual before the gathered congregation.
8. *Additional Regulations.* The General Assembly declare as follows regarding additional regulations:

8.1 In exceptional circumstances where people are unable to physically gather for constituted meetings, the Assembly Clerks' Office is empowered to make regulations consistent with this Act for the conducting of any Church business via technology in accordance with the principles of the Free Church of Scotland making suitable accommodation to the exceptional circumstances.

8.2 Such regulations must be communicated to each Presbytery Clerk and made widely available to the Church.

8.3 Any regulations made under this Act will be reviewable by the General Assembly or the Commission of the Assembly.

9. *Restrictions.* The General Assembly declare that the provisions of this Act are for exceptional and emergency situations only and not to be adopted for meetings of Church courts in normal circumstances.

Act 6 – Renewing the Appointment of Principal Martin

Number 5 of Class 2

Category: Governance

Monday 18th May 2020

The General Assembly thank Principal Martin for his contribution to the growth of ETS. They renew his appointment as Principal according to the terms of Act 32, Class 2, 2015, as amended by Act 16, Class 2, 2019, for a further five years.

Act 7 – Correcting Inconsistencies in Legislation Governing Edinburgh Theological Seminary

Number 6 of Class 2

Category: Governance

Monday 18th May 2020

1. The General Assembly note that Paragraph 3.1.6.4 of Act 16, Class 2, 2019 regarding Governance of ETS is inconsistent with Paragraph 3.1 of Act 26, Class 2, 2014 regarding Staffing Arrangements for ETS in that it states that 'It will be the responsibility of the Seminary Board to oversee and determine the appointment of lecturing staff at the Seminary'. They instruct that Paragraph 3.1.6.4 of Act 16, Class 2, 2019 be deleted and that the following paragraphs be renumbered accordingly.

2. The General Assembly also note the inconsistency between Paragraph 3.1 of Act 26, Class 2, 2014 regarding Staffing Arrangements for ETS and Paragraph 6.14 of the same Act in that it states that 'The General Assembly will have the final authority over appointments.' They instruct that this sentence be deleted from Paragraph 6.14 and that the revised Paragraph 6.14 should read as follows: 'The Seminary Board will include in its report to the General Assembly, all courses together with Course Organisers, Part-time Core Lecturers and Module lecturers.'

Act 8 – Amending Act 6, Class 2, 2014 regarding the Membership of the Board of Ministry

Number 7 of Class 2

Category: Governance

Monday 18th May 2020

The General Assembly note the comments of the Board of Ministry on the Board's membership. They amend Paragraph 1.2.3 of Act 6, Class 2, 2014, as amended by Act, 12, Class 2, 2015, Act 17, Class 2, 2016, Act 12, Class 2, 2019, and Act 15, Class 2, 2019, to read as follows:

'Ten members in total including the Principal of Edinburgh Theological Seminary ex officio, one additional member of the College Senate appointed annually by them on an ex officio basis, and one additional member who shall be a minister in a Training Congregation nominated by the Board of Ministry. The remaining membership shall comprise three ministers and four elders appointed by the General Assembly for a four-year term renewable for one further term of four years. The Chairman shall be appointed from the membership of the Board by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable

for one further term of four years. The quorum shall be three members of the Board. The Board shall be empowered to appoint Consultants and Advisors as required, particularly to liaise closely with the Mission Board and to assist with interviews and other functions of the Board.'

Act 9 – Regarding the Status of Golspie Free Church

Number 8 of Class 2

Category: Mission & Ministry

Monday 18th May 2020

1. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Northern Presbytery regarding a five-year terminable/renewable appointment for the congregation of Golspie and, noting the recommendation of the Mission Board, grant its crave.
2. They terminate the current Alternative Ministerial Arrangements under the terms of Act 13, Class 2, 2014.
3. They grant permission to the congregation of Golspie to appoint a Minister on a five-year terminable/renewable appointment in accordance with the terms of Act 1, Class 1, 2018 anent The Sustentation Fund, Paragraph 3.4 subject to the submission of a development plan to the satisfaction of the Mission Board.
4. They appoint Rev. Eric Paterson to the congregation of Golspie in accordance with Act 1, Class 1, 2018, anent the Sustentation Fund and they declare that his appointment be continuous with his original induction to the charge.

Act 10 – Admitting Rev. Dr Euan George Dodds to the Ministry of the Free Church of Scotland

Number 9 of Class 2

Category: Mission & Ministry

Monday 18th May 2020

1. The General Assembly receive the application from Rev. Dr Euan George Dodds. They admit him as an ordained minister of the Free Church of Scotland, with effect from 18th May 2020, and following his satisfactory response to the prescribed Questions and his signing of the Formula before the General Assembly.
2. The General Assembly thereafter direct the Principal Clerk to add the name of Rev. Dr Euan George Dodds to the register of Ministers without Charge Available for Call.
3. The General Assembly order the supporting documents to be held *in retentis*.

Act 11 – Appointing the 2021 General Assembly

Number 10 of Class 2

Category: General Assembly

Monday 18th May 2020

The General Assembly appointed the 2021 General Assembly to meet in the Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, on Monday 17th May 2021 at 6.00pm.

Act 12 – Loyal and Dutiful Address

Number 11 of Class 2

Category: General Assembly

Tuesday 6th October 2020

The General Assembly called for the Loyal and Dutiful Address to Her Majesty the Queen, which was given in by the Moderator. The Assembly approved the Address presented by the Moderator and appointed it to be duly signed and transmitted to the Secretary of State for Scotland, with a letter from the Clerk.

May it please Your Majesty.

We, the Ministers and Elders of the Free Church of Scotland, met in General Assembly on the 6th day of October 2020, humbly offer Your Majesty the expression of our continued loyalty to Your Majesty's Person and Throne and to the Constitutional Monarchy of which you are the honoured Head and Representative.

We pray for Your Majesty's Parliaments in Westminster and Holyrood, committing to our Great God, the Prime Minister and the First Minister, and their respective Governments, in the many responsibilities that devolve upon Your Majesty's servants at home and abroad.

We recognise that the nation faces particular challenges during a time of global pandemic. We are grateful to Your Majesty for the address delivered from Windsor Castle in April, encouraging the nation to work together in the fight against the coronavirus. We are also thankful to Your Majesty's Governments for the effort made to protect the peoples of the United Kingdom from COVID-19. We mourn the loss of so many lives to this virus in our nation, and across the world. We acknowledge with gratitude, those employed within the National Health Service, home carers, and all essential workers, whose tireless work served all our communities during a time of lockdown.

We are thankful to God for the good recovery made by His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, from COVID-19. We continue to pray for the good health of Your Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh, and for the health of all the Royal Household.

We note the dutiful service of several members of Your Majesty's family, who assist in Your Royal and Constitutional duties and promote very many charities and good causes. In particular we celebrate the seventieth birthday of Her Royal Highness, Princess Anne, the Princess Royal, whose steadfast service to Your Majesty, and to the nation, continues to earn such admiration and respect.

We shared in Your Majesty's disappointment that the planned celebrations for the 75th anniversary of VE Day were not possible, but we thank Your Majesty for Your address marking the occasion, reminding us of the great sacrifices made by many to secure our freedom, and also for recognising that the nation's response to the current crisis revealed we were still a nation those brave soldiers, sailors and airmen would recognise and admire. We thank Your Majesty for the timely reminder to never give up and never despair.

As we remember the service and sacrifice made by many in previous conflicts, we also express our thankfulness for the continued service and sacrifice of all Your Majesty's Armed Forces, serving at home and abroad. We remember in our prayers all who have lost loved ones, and those who have suffered injury in mind and body. We thank Almighty God for the work of Your Majesty's chaplains to the Armed Forces, and the ministry of the Soldiers and Airmen's Scripture Readers Association. During a time of global instability, we continue to pray for peace.

Your Majesty, as Ministers and Elders of the Free Church of Scotland, be assured that we pray regularly for Your Majesty's person, family and governments. We commit ourselves and our congregations to do so willingly and as we are encouraged to do so by God's Word.

We give thanks to God for our Saviour, Jesus Christ, and our shared faith. The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.

So pray Your Majesty's most faithful subjects, the Ministers and Elders of the Free Church of Scotland, in General Assembly convened.

**Act 13 – Amending Act 1, 2020 Regarding Exceptional Arrangements for the 2020
General Assembly and Presbyteries**

Number 12 of Class 2

Category: General Assembly

Tuesday 6th October 2020

The General Assembly amend paragraph 6 of Act 1, 2020 - Regarding Exceptional Arrangements for the 2020 General Assembly and Presbyteries to read:

“6. The General Assembly declare that the 2020 examination of the records of Presbyteries, Boards and Committees be cancelled. They instruct that arrangements be made for the examination of all records for years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 in time to report to the 2021 General Assembly.”

Act 14 – General Assessors to the Presbytery of Glasgow & Argyll

Number 13 of Class 2

Category: *Governance*

Tuesday 6th October 2020

The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll and grant its crave. They appoint Rev. David C. Meredith, Mission Director, and Rev. Nigel Anderson, minister at Livingston, to be General Assessors to the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll, with the appointments to be reviewed at the May 2023 General Assembly.

Act 15 – Admitting Rev. Douglas Cranston to the Ministry of the Free Church of Scotland

Number 14 of Class 2

Category: *Mission & Ministry*

Tuesday 6th October 2020

1. The General Assembly receive the application for the Free Church ministry from Rev. Douglas Cranston. They admit him as an ordained minister of the Free Church of Scotland, on receiving satisfactory responses to the prescribed Questions and his signing of the Formula before the General Assembly.
2. The General Assembly thereafter direct the Principal Clerk to add the name of Rev. Douglas Cranston to the Register of Retired Ministers.
3. The General Assembly direct that documents supporting the application to be held *in retentis*.

Act 16 – Admitting Rev. Benjamin Fiddian to the Ministry of the Free Church of Scotland

Number 15 of Class 2

Category: *Mission & Ministry*

Tuesday 6th October 2020

1. The General Assembly receive the application for the Free Church ministry from Rev. Benjamin Fiddian. They admit him as an ordained minister of the Free Church of Scotland, on receiving satisfactory responses to the prescribed Questions and his signing of the Formula before the General Assembly.
2. The General Assembly thereafter direct the Principal Clerk to add the name of Rev. Benjamin Fiddian to the register of Ministers without Charge Available for Call.
3. The General Assembly direct that documents supporting the application to be held *in retentis*.

Act 17 – Church History Programme Leader / Lecturer

Number 16 of Class 2

Category: *ETS*

Tuesday 6th October 2020

1. The General Assembly approve the appointment of an MTh Programme Leader / Lecturer in the department of Church History at ETS instead of the appointment of a Church History Course Organiser.
2. The General Assembly declare that the Programme Leader / Lecturer may be male or female and that the person will be appointed based on suitability and qualifications for the post. They declare that the appointee should hold a relevant doctorate and, if possible, some track record of relevant publications.
3. The General Assembly declare that the Programme Leader / Lecturer's responsibilities shall include providing supervision in MTh (Taught) in Scottish Church History and Theology, engaging in research and publications, particularly in the field of Scottish Church History, assisting in the delivery of lectures, seminars and tutorials in the Church History Department, assisting in the general administration responsibilities at ETS, and providing pastoral and academic support to BTh and MTh students.
4. The General Assembly declare that the Programme Leader / Lecturer will work alongside the Director of Post Graduate studies in supervising post graduate students and will work within existing BTh structures in delivering an agreed programme of lectures under the management of the Principal.
5. The General Assembly declare that the Programme Leader / Lecturer in Church History must be a communicant member under the pastoral discipline of a Reformed Church, shall give unqualified subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith, and shall be in full sympathy with the doctrinal position of the Free Church.
6. The General Assembly declare that the Programme Leader / Lecturer will be a full-time member of staff at ETS and have a seat on the Senate.

Act 18 – Day of Prayer for COVID-19

Number 17 of Class 2

Category: Mission & Ministry

Tuesday 6th October 2020

The General Assembly record their concern over the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and its impact on the overall health and wellbeing of our people as well as its impact on the national economy. They note with sadness the spiritual and moral decline of recent times and the apparent failure to acknowledge the name of our God and to reach out to Him for help as the crisis worsens at this time. They appoint a day of prayer to be observed in all congregations on 25th October 2020. They call on the Church to pray to Almighty God for His merciful intervention to suppress the coronavirus, to give recovery and good health to those who suffer, to comfort those who have endured loss, to turn the hearts of our people in repentance to the Lord our God, and for the Spirit of God to bless the preaching of the gospel. They instruct the Mission Board to coordinate this day of prayer in addition to the National Day of Prayer appointed to be observed on 25th November 2020.

Act 19 – Changing the Status of the Congregation of Dunblane

Number 18 of Class 2

Category: Mission & Ministry

Tuesday 6th October 2020

The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll regarding the appointment of a five-year reviewable appointment for the congregation of Dunblane and, noting the recommendation of the Mission Board, grant its crave. They terminate the locally subsidised arrangements for ministry at Dunblane under the provisions of Act 14, Class 2, 2013. They declare that the appointment of the current minister, Rev. Allan Shearer, be on the basis of a five-year reviewable appointment according to the Act 1, Class 1, 2018, Paragraph 3.4, and that his appointment be continuous with his original induction to the charge. They repeal Act 22, Class 2, May 2019.

Act 20 – Revoking Permission to Appoint Assistant Minister at Glasgow City

Number 19 of Class 2

Category: *Mission & Ministry*

Tuesday 6th October 2020

The General Assembly receive the request from the congregation of Glasgow City Free Church and the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll regarding the revocation of the permission to call an Assistant Minister and, noting the recommendation of the Mission Board, grant the request. They revoke the permission of the congregation of Glasgow City Free Church to appoint an Assistant Minister and they terminate the remittance arrangement required by Act 18, Class 2, 2013 anent Assistantships with immediate effect. They repeal Act 18, Class 2, 2019.

Act 21 – Appointing the Commission of Assembly

Number 20 of Class 2

Category: *General Assembly*

Tuesday 6th October 2020

The General Assembly hereby appoint a Commission consisting of all the members of this General Assembly along with Rev. Iver Martin named by the Moderator to be their Commission.

1. **Meetings.** This Commission is appointed to meet at Edinburgh on Wednesday 3rd March 2021 at 7 o'clock in the evening, and at other times and places as may be required with power to choose their own Moderator.
 - 1.1. *Exceptional Circumstances.* The General Assembly declare that it shall be competent for the Commission to meet virtually under the provisions of Act 4, Class 2, 2020 should the current COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings still be in force at the time.
 - 1.2. *Quorum.* The quorum shall be any twelve or more of their number, of whom four at least are always to be ministers.
 - 1.3. *Business.* Items of business to be included in the Note of Business of the Commission shall be submitted to the Assembly Clerks' Office at least ten days before the Commission is due to meet.
 - 1.4. *Church Courts.* The General Assembly declare that no other Court of the Church may meet on the dates on which the Assembly has appointed its Commission to meet.
 - 1.5. *Continuance.* This Commission shall remain in being until another Commission is appointed. All members are required to attend the diets of the Commission.
2. **General Powers.** The General Assembly empower this Commission, or their quorum, to take up and dispose of any matter referred to them by the General Assembly or arising out of any Act or finding of the Assembly in accordance with the instructions given by the Assembly.
 - 2.1 *Interests of the Church.* The Commission shall give attention to the interests of the Church in every respect to ensure that the Church does not suffer or incur any prejudice which it is possible for their powers to prevent, as they will be answerable.
 - 2.2 *Public Questions.* The Commission shall give such a lead as they are able on moral issues and provide advice and assistance to Presbyteries, Board and Committees of the General Assembly, upon their making application.
 - 2.3 *Exclusions.* The powers granted above shall not apply to particular affairs or processes before Presbyteries which have only a local relevance and have no reference to the whole Church.
3. **Review.** The General Assembly empower this Commission, or their quorum, to receive appeals, complaints, petitions and references from individuals and from the lower courts of the Church, and all such matters as were previously directed to Provincial Synods.
 - 3.1 *Procedure.* The General Assembly declare that the procedure for the submission of papers, etc., regarding references, appeals, complaints, and petitions be such that these be forwarded to the Principal Clerk of Assembly for inclusion in the business of the Commission as this is set out in the 2020 Act on the Dissolution of Synods.

4. **Admissions.** The General Assembly empower this Commission, or their quorum, to receive applications for admission to the Free Church as follows.

4.1 *Applications from Ministers.* The said Commission is hereby authorised to receive and dispose of applications duly submitted through Presbyteries and the Board of Ministry from ministers of other denominations seeking admission to the Free Church ministry

4.2 *Applications from Congregations.* The said Commission is authorised to receive and dispose of applications through Presbyteries from any congregation wishing to join the Free Church of Scotland submitted in accordance with the procedures laid down by the General Assembly.

4.3 *Ministerial Rolls.* The said Commission is authorised to receive and dispose of petitions received from Presbyteries regarding the transference of the name of a minister from the Roll of Resigned Ministers to the Roll of Ministers Without Charge Eligible for Call.

5. **Mission Board.** The General Assembly empower this Commission, or their quorum, to receive applications from the Mission Board as follows.

4.1 *Church Development.* The said Commission is empowered to receive and dispose of applications from preaching stations and church plants to be raised to fully sanctioned charges submitted through the Mission Board.

4.2 *Consolidation.* The said Commission is empowered to receive and dispose of applications from the Mission Board to link or unite two or more congregations following upon a Report from Board.

4.3 *Global Mission.* The said Commission is empowered to receive and dispose of applications from the Mission Board to appoint Ministers and workers in fulfilling the Church's commitment to global mission following a report from the Board.

6. **Limited Powers.** The General Assembly declare that it is not competent for the Commission to become involved in matters other than those committed and referred to them as above. All their proceedings shall be conducted in accordance with the Acts and Constitution of the Church, avoiding anything which is contrary or prejudicial to such Acts and Constitution.

5.1 *Accountability.* The General Assembly further declare that in all their proceedings they shall be accountable to and censurable by next General Assembly as they may find reason arising from the above introduction to Paragraph 6.

5.2 *Appeals.* The General Assembly affirm that in general terms the findings of the Commission of Assembly are final and not subject to appeal. However, they declare that, in the case of Complaints, Appeals, Petitions, and References, it shall be competent for parties in the review process to appeal to the General Assembly.

ACTS OF THE COMMISSION OF ASSEMBLY

Act 1 – Transferring Rev. Gavino Fioretti to the Roll of Ministers Without Charge Eligible for a Call

Number 1 of Class 2

Category: Mission & Ministry

Wednesday 2nd October 2019

1. The Commission of Assembly receive the petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth and Rev. Gavino Fioretti, and noting the recommendation of the Board of Ministry, instruct that the name of Rev. Gavino Fioretti be transferred from the Roll of Resigned and Retired Ministers to the Register of Ministers without Charge Available for Call.
 2. The Commission of Assembly further instruct further instruct the Chairman of the Mission Board to provide pastoral support and counsel to Mr Fioretti on his return to Scotland.
-

Act 2 – Appointing Mr John MacDonald as Editor of *The Record*

Number 2 of Class 2

Category Mission & Ministry

Wednesday 2nd October 2019

1. The Commission of Assembly appoint Mr John Macdonald as Editor of *The Record* effective from 2nd October 2019. They declare that Mr Macdonald's appointment be according to terms of Act 8, Class 2, 2015.

Act 3 – Admitting Abbeygreen Church, Lesmahagow as a Congregation of Free Church of Scotland

Number 3 of Class 2

Category Mission & Ministry

Wednesday 4th March 2020

1. The Commission of Assembly establish the body of Christians worshipping in the Abbeygreen Church as a fully sanctioned pastoral charge of the Free Church of Scotland, effective from 31st March 2020.
2. The Commission of Assembly declare that the new congregation shall be known as Abbeygreen Church within the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll under the ministry of the Rev. David Carmichael on his admission as a minister of the Free Church of Scotland.
3. They declare Mr Carmichael's appointment to be without restriction according to the provisions of Act 1, Class 1, 2018 regarding the Sustentation Fund and grant him a seat in the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll.
4. They instruct the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll to meet on 31st March 2020 to appoint General Assessor Elders to the Kirk Session so that the Congregation may proceed to an election and ordination of office-bearers as soon as practically possible.
5. They further instruct the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll to appoint a meeting with the congregation for a service of public worship for the purpose of formally establishing the Congregation and welcoming the congregation and the minister formally into the Presbytery.

Act 4 – Admitting Rev. David Carmichael to the Ministry of the Free Church of Scotland

Number 4 of Class 2

Category General Assembly

Wednesday 4th March 2020

1. The Commission of Assembly receive the application from Rev. David Carmichael, and noting the recommendation of the Board of Ministry, admit him as an ordained minister of the Free Church of Scotland, with effect from 31st March 2020 and subsequent to him answering the Questions and signing the Formula.
2. The Commission of Assembly instruct the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll to meet on 31st March 2020 and to make arrangements at this meeting for Mr Carmichael to answer the Questions and sign the Formula under their supervision. They instruct the Presbytery Clerk thereafter to notify the Principal Clerk of Assembly by extract of the proceedings of the Presbytery.
3. The Commission of Assembly declare Mr Carmichael to be minister of Abbeygreen Church upon his answering the Questions and signing of the Formula under the direction of the Presbytery, and upon Abbeygreen Church being admitted as a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland.
4. The Commission of Assembly instruct Mr Carmichael to complete the Presbyterian Church Ministry Module, available through Edinburgh Theological Seminary, either by attendance or by distance learning.
5. The Commission of Assembly note the recommendations of the Board of Ministry and accordingly commend those who have already given their help to Rev. David Carmichael and the Abbeygreen congregation in their application process. They instruct the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll and the Mission Board to take all possible steps to provide

ongoing support, encouragement and a wholehearted welcome to the minister and congregation at Abbeygreen Church, Lesmahagow.

6. The Commission of Assembly order the supporting documents to be held *in retentis*.
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**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
HELD via ZOOM AUDIO-VISUAL TECHNOLOGY ON
MONDAY 18th MAY 2020**

1. **Assembly Constituted:** By means of the Zoom audio-visual technology on 18th May 2020, which day the Ministers and Elders, Commissioners from Presbyteries appointed to meet this day, were convened, and after devotions led by Rev. Donald G Macdonald, Moderator of the 2019 General Assembly, the General Assembly was duly constituted.
2. **General Assembly Business Committee.** The General Assembly called for the report of the Business Committee, which was presented by the Principal Clerk, who addressed the Assembly.
 - 2.1. **The Finding.** It was moved, seconded and agreed that:
 1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the report and thank the Committee.
 2. The General Assembly humbly calls on the whole Church to continue in prayer to Almighty God in the midst of the current coronavirus crisis. They call for prayer for all those affected by the virus and for the Government as it seeks to manage the spread of the virus. They give thanks to God for the NHS, for all key health care workers, and for other emergency services and commit them to God's care and protection.

(A) ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS

1. The General Assembly, noting the Government restrictions on travel and public gatherings, declare that the Assembly shall convene to take up urgent and time-critical business using the Zoom audio-visual technology platform.
2. The General Assembly declare that the Assembly shall convene for one session only on Monday 18th May 2020 at 6.00pm. They further declare that the General Assembly will adjourn on Monday 18th May 2020 to meet again on Tuesday 6th October 2020 at 9.00am in the Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, and to rise not later than 1.00pm on 8th October 2020. They empower the Moderator and the Principal Clerk, in consultation with the Business Committee, to make alternative arrangements should the current restrictions on social distancing and public gatherings still apply.
3. The General Assembly, noting the benefits of continuity in the role of Moderator at this time, and taking cognisance of the uncertainty regarding the Assembly meeting for normal business in this year, appoint Rev. Donald G. Macdonald, Moderator of the 2019 General Assembly, as Moderator of the 2020 General Assembly. They thank Mr Macdonald for his willingness to continue in the role of Moderator for a second year.
4. The General Assembly note that Rev. Neil MacMillan has been elected Moderator-Designate of the 2020 General Assembly. They declare that Mr MacMillan's election shall be valid for the purposes of appointing the Moderator of the 2021 General Assembly.
5. The General Assembly appoint the 2021 General Assembly to meet on Monday 17th May 2021 in the Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, at 6.00pm.

(B) GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROGRAMME

1. The General Assembly approve the draft Assembly programme containing only urgent and time-critical business as the programme for this Assembly.
2. The General Assembly declare that, when confidential business is taken up in the report of the Board of Ministry, related documents will be read out by the Chairman of the Board instead of being distributed to Commissioners.
3. The General Assembly declare that, on an application for admission as a minister of the Free Church of Scotland being successful, the Moderator shall proceed immediately to ask the successful applicant the relevant Questions from Act 12, 1846 and, on receiving satisfactory answers to the Questions, to proceed to the signing of the Formula using the process outlined in the proposed deliverance of the Assembly Clerks' Report.

(C) GENERAL ASSEMBLY DOCUMENTS

1. The Roll of the General Assembly, having been presented in a printed list and acknowledged as correct, were recorded as follows:

ROLL OF 2020 GENERAL ASSEMBLY**Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth**

<i>Ministers</i>		<i>Elders</i>	
Rev. Neil MacMillan	Cornerstone, Edinburgh	Mr Greg Doty	Dunfermline
Rev. Andrew Robertson	Charleston, Dundee	Mr Charles Douglas	Elder Memorial, Leith
Rev. David Randall	Falkirk	Mr Harrison Perkins	London City
Rev. Derek Lamont	St Columba's	Mr Alex Ogilvie	Montrose
Rev. Hamish Sneddon	Assistant, St Andrews	Mr John Ferguson	St Peter's Dundee
Rev. David Meredith	Mission Director		
Rev. Dr Alistair Wilson	ETS		

Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll

<i>Ministers</i>		<i>Elders</i>	
Rev. Ian M. Watson	Blackwood & Kirkmuirhill	Mr Iain Sanderson	Blackwood & Kirkmuirhill
Rev. Jonathan de Groot	Christ Church, Glasgow	Mr Evan Macdonald	Glasgow City
Rev. Ivor MacDonald	Coatbridge	Mr Cameron Maciver	Coatbridge
Rev. Andrew Longwe	Cumbernauld	Mr Colin Macdonald	Cumbernauld
Rev. Iain Thomson	East Kilbride	Mr John Macdonald	Dowanvale
Rev. Kenneth Boyd	Govanhill	Mr John Mackenzie	Dowanvale
Rev. Benjamin Wilks	Newmilns		
Rev. Duncan Peters	Asian Outreach		

Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross

<i>Ministers</i>		<i>Elders</i>	
Rev. Angus MacRae	Free North, Inverness	Mr John Macdonald	Dingwall & Strathpeffer
Rev. Robin Gray	Gardenstown	Mr John A.W. Scott	Gardenstown
Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean	Greyfriars & Stratherrick	Mr Andrew Murchison	Glenurquhart & Fort Augustus
Rev. Chris Davidson	Merkinch	Mr James Fraser	Kiltarlity
Rev. Sean Ankers	Glenurquhart	Mr Roderick MacRae	Knockbain
Rev. Innes MacSween	Smithton & Culloden	Mr Blair Gardner	Urquhart & Resolis

Northern Presbytery

<i>Ministers</i>		<i>Elders</i>	
Rev. Howard Stone	Castletown & Community	Mr John Garvie	Tain & Fearn
Rev. Duncan Macleod	Dornoch	Mr Duncan Maclean	Tain & Fearn
Rev. Alasdair Macaulay	Tain & Fearn	Mr William Mackenzie	Tain & Fearn
Rev. John Marker	Thurso & North Coast	Mr William A. Paterson	Tain & Fearn

Presbytery of Skye and Wester Ross

<i>Ministers</i>		<i>Elders</i>	
Rev. Neil L. Macdonald	Lochbroom & Coigach	Mr Robert Macdonald	Duirinish
Rev. Marcos Florit	Lochcarron & Applecross	Mr William Fraser	Plockton & Kyle
Rev. Roddie Rankin	Plockton & Kyle	Mr Duncan Mackinnon	Portree & Bracadale
Rev. Donald G. Macdonald	Portree & Bracadale	Mr John A. Gillies	Portree & Bracadale

Presbytery of the Western Isles

<i>Ministers</i>		<i>Elders</i>	
Rev. Malcolm Macdonald	Callanish	Mr Calum Martin	Back
Rev. Ewen Matheson	Cross	Mr Angus Smith	Callanish
Rev. Calum I. Macleod	Lochs	Mr Iain H. Macleod	Callanish
Rev. Roderick J. Campbell	North Tolsta	Mr Gordon Macleod	North Harris
Rev. Malcolm Macleod	Shawbost	Mr John Macaulay	North Uist
Rev. Thomas Penman	South Uist & Benbecula	Mr Murdo Murray	Stornoway

Presbytery of North America

<i>Ministers</i>		<i>Elders</i>	
Rev. Kent Compton	Desable Free Church	Mr Stephen Plouffe	Murray River Free Church

2. The General Assembly declare that the need for the submission Elders' Certificates according to the terms of Act 8, 1853 as amended by Act 9, 1863, be waived for this Assembly in the light of the current COVID-19 crisis and its impact on meetings of Church courts.
3. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Standing Orders, distributed with Assembly papers, with Act 33, Class 2, 2010 appended, as the Standing Orders of this Assembly and for the meeting of 6th October 2020 as required.
4. The General Assembly declare that the following sections of Standing Orders be suspended for the 18th May 2020 Session of the Assembly: B.1 – Elders' Certificates; C.3 – Examination of Presbytery Records; E2 – Reading of Speeches and Length of Speeches; .E.4 – Submission of Amendments and Addenda apart from Paragraph 1; E.14 – Examination of Presbytery Records; E.15 – Examination of Records of Boards and Committees; E.16 – Additional Assembly Committees.
5. The General Assembly further declare that Standing Orders Section (E), Paragraph 5.2 regarding reading and length of speeches be amended to read as follows for the purposes of this meeting only: 'That in the discussion of any question the proposer of each motion may address the House for not longer than 10 minutes, and the seconder for 5 minutes; and no subsequent speaker shall address the House for a longer period than 5 minutes; and that these limits shall only be exceeded when the Moderator shall have ascertained that the House desires any speaker to continue and shall intimate the ascertained desire to that effect.'

(D) MISCELLANEOUS

1. The General Assembly instruct the Assembly Clerks to examine the records of Boards and Committees and to report on this, and the examination of Presbytery records, to the October 2020 meeting of the Assembly.
2. The General Assembly declare that all ministerial appointment which are due for review in May 2020 be extended under the current terms until the 2021 General Assembly.
3. The General Assembly further declare that the fixed terms of all ministers on the Rolls of Ministers according to Act 8, Class 2, 2019 be extended until such time as revised and updated arrangements are approved by the 2021 General Assembly.
4. The General Assembly instruct Presbyteries to proceed with the appointment of Moderator and the election of Representative Elder at Presbytery and Synod according to the terms of Act 1, Class 1, 2019 and to do so with reference to 18th May 2020, the date on which the 2020 General Assembly will adjourn to meet again on 6th October 2020.
3. **Assembly Clerks' Office.** The General Assembly then called for the Report of the Assembly Clerks, which being printed and in the hands of members, was referred to by the Principal Clerk, who addressed the Assembly.
- 3.1. **The Finding.** It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

(A) NOMINATIONS

1. The General Assembly note the resignation of Mr Calum MacMillan from the Mission Board and thank him for his services.
2. The General Assembly note that the term of Rev. Angus MacRae as member and Chairman of the Board of Ministry comes to an end at this Assembly. They thank Mr MacRae for his services to the Church on the Board of Ministry.
3. The General Assembly note that Mr James Fraser is stepping down as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. They thank Mr Fraser for his years of unstinting and faithful services to the Church as the Board's Chairman.
4. The General Assembly ordain that Paragraph 1.1 of Act 2, Class 1, 2020 regarding the Judicial Commission and its composition and membership be revised to read as follows: The Judicial Commission shall be appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation in the first instance of the Committee to Review Disciplinary Procedures and thereafter on the recommendation of the Board of Trustees. The Judicial Commission shall be comprised of 24 members, two ministers and two elders from each of the home Presbyteries, appointed for a term of four years, renewable annually by the General Assembly for a subsequent four-year term. Those appointed shall be senior ministers and elders of the church with at least 10 years' experience of active service. The General Assembly shall appoint one of the members of the Judicial Commission as Chairman.
5. The General Assembly appoint Rev. Paul Clarke to serve on the Board of Ministry as a member and as the Board's Chairman.
6. The General Assembly repeal Act 5, Class 2, 1968 which states that the Clerk of the Training of the Ministry should be a minister. They declare that all future appointments be on the basis of experience, and gifts and abilities suited to the duties. They appoint Mr Charles Anderson as Clerk of the Board of Ministry to succeed the late Rev. David E.C. Ford according to the terms of Act 10, Class 2, 2015 anent the Appointment of Clerks to Committees, Boards, Presbyteries and the General Assembly.
7. The General Assembly appoint the following membership of Boards, Committees and the Judicial Commission:
8. The General Assembly note that the figure in the year column in the tables below refers to the new year of service in a four-year term, and that the figure in the term column refers to which four-year term the year refers to. They appoint the following membership of Boards, Committees and the Judicial Commission:

Board of Ministry			Year	Term
	Rev. Paul Clarke	EP	1	1
	Rev. Ivor Macdonald	GA	4	2
	Rev. Colin L. Macleod	SWR	1	1
	1 member appointed by Senate			
	Mr Murdo Murray	WI	3	2
	Mr Michael W. J. Townsend	WI	3	2
	Mr Clive Bailey	GA	1	2
	Mr Charles Anderson	ILR	3	2
	ETS Principal <i>ex officio</i>			
Chairman:	Rev. Paul Clarke			
Clerk:	Mr Charles Anderson			

Board of Trustees			Year	Term
	Mr Donald Forsyth	ILR	3	1
	Mr James Fraser	ILR	2	4
	Mr Callum Macdonald	ILR	2	2
	Mr Neil Longwe	GA	2	1
	Mr Mark Robinson	N	2	1
	Rev. Kenneth J. Macleod	GA	3	2
	Rev. David C. Meredith	EP	3	2
	Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean	ILR	4	2
	Rev. Paul Clarke	EP	3	2
	Rev. Calum Iain Macleod	ILR	1	2

Monday 18th May, Forenoon

Session 1

	Mr Alastair Oliver	EP	1	2
	Mr Donald Macleod (Stornoway)	WI	2	1
Chairman:	Mr Donald Forsyth			
Clerk:	Chief Executive Officer			
Adviser	Principal Clerk <i>ex officio</i>			

Ecumenical Relations Committee		Year	Term
	Mission Director	<i>ex officio</i>	
	Mission Board Chairman	<i>ex officio</i>	
	Principal Clerk of Assembly	<i>ex officio</i>	
	Assistant Clerk Representative	<i>ex officio</i>	
	Principal of ETS		
	Moderator of the Assembly		
	Mr Alastair Simison	2	1
Convener:	Rev. Iver Martin		
Clerk:	Principal Clerk of Assembly		

ETS Board		Year	Term
	Principal <i>ex officio</i>		
	1 other member of Senate		
	Chairman Board of Ministry		
	President SRC		
	Rev. Thomas Davis	EP	4
	Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean	ILR	3
	Rev. Dr Fergus A. J. Macdonald	EP	3
	Mr William Mackenzie	N	1
	Mr Ross S. Finlay	LIR	1
Chairman:	Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean		
Clerk:	Seminary Secretary		

Mission Board		Year	Term
	Rev. Jeremy Ross	EP	1
	Rev. Dr Robert Akroyd	EP	4
	Rev. Iain MacAskill	GA	2
	Rev. David Macleod	WI	4
	Rev. Chris Davidson	ILR	2
	Rev. Donald G. Macdonald	SWR	2
	Dr Andrew Maciver	EP	2
	Dr John Morrison	EP	2
Chairman:	Rev. Dr Robert Akroyd		
Secretary	Mission Coordinator		

Psalmody & Praise Committee		Year	Term
	Rev. Iver Martin	EP	3
	Rev. Neil L. Macdonald	SWR	2
	Mr Cameron Maciver	GA	3
	Rev. Ruairidh Maclean	GA	2
	Mr Kenneth Macdonald	WI	4
	Mr Angus T. Macleod	GA	2
Convener:	Rev. Ruairidh Maclean		
Clerk:	Mr Angus T. Macleod		

9. The General Assembly reappoint the **Judicial Commission** as follows:

Presbytery		Year	Term
Edinburgh & Perth	Rev. David C. Meredith	1	3
	Rev. Neil MacMillan	3	1
	Mr John MacRae	1	3
	Mr Neil Campbell	3	1
Glasgow & Argyll	Rev. Iain MacAskill	1	3
	Rev. Ian M. Watson	3	1
	Mr Evan MacDonald	1	3
	Mr Rod Morrison	3	1
Inverness, Lochaber & Ross	Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean	3	1
	Rev. Angus MacRae	1	3
	Mr Andrew Murchison	1	3
	Mr John Macaulay	3	1
Northern	Rev. Howard Stone	3	1
	Rev. Gordon Mair	3	1
	Mr Bill Ferrier	1	1
	Mr John Skinner	3	1
Skye & Wester Ross	Rev. Marcos Florit	3	1
	Rev. Roddie Rankin	1	1
	Mr Ian Macdonald	3	1
	Mr Stewart Clarke	1	1
Western Isles	Rev. Andrew Coghill	1	1
	Rev. Ewen Matheson	2	1
	Mr Donald Macleod (Shawbost)	3	1
	Mr Murdo Murray (Stornoway)	1	3
Chairman:	Mr Neil Campbell		
Clerk:	Principal Clerk		

(B) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

1. The General Assembly note the difficulties likely to be encountered by Deacons' Courts and Finance Committees in holding Annual General Meetings for the purpose of approving annual trustees' reports and congregational accounts.
2. The General Assembly instruct Deacons' Courts and Finance Committees, in the event that it has not been possible to hold the Annual Congregational Meeting, to submit annual reports and accounts to OSCR provided these have first of all been approved by the Deacons' Court/Finance Committee.

(C) ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The General Assembly, recognising the need to make use of audio-visual technology in the carrying out of Church business in exceptional circumstances, enact and ordain as follows:

1. *General Principles.* The General declare that the following general principles apply for the purposes of this Act.
 - 1.1. The General Assembly declare that exceptional circumstances for the purposes of this Act are circumstances where, due to restrictions on public gatherings imposed by the Government or other legislative authority, Presbyteries are unable to meet physically in one location to constitute a meeting in the normal way.
 - 1.2. Where such exceptional circumstances exist, a Kirk Session may proceed to appoint a congregational meeting to elect a minister to fill a vacancy, and a Presbytery may proceed to hold a meeting to moderate a call, license a student, and conduct an induction or an ordination using audio-visual technology without the need for people to be physically present in one location.
 - 1.3. Such a meeting will be governed by the principles in Act 33, Class 2, 2010 – Use of Modern Technology in Conducting Church Business alongside the additional principles outlined in this Act.

2. *The Signing of the Formula.* The General Assembly declare that, where, during a meeting of Presbytery conducted using audio-visual technology, a person is required to answer the Questions and sign the Formula the following procedure will be used.

- 2.1. The Clerk will provide the person with a copy of the Formula in PDF in advance of the meeting.
- 2.2. The Moderator will ask the person the Questions via videoconferencing at the appropriate time during the meeting.
- 2.3. On giving satisfactory answers to the Questions, the Moderator will then instruct the person to sign the Formula.
- 2.4. The person will show the unsigned Formula to the Camera.
- 2.5. The person will sign the Formula on Camera.
- 2.6. The person will show the signed Formula to the Camera.
- 2.7. The signed Formula will then be posted to the Presbytery Clerk.

3. *Congregational Meetings to Elect Minister.* The General Assembly declare that, in exceptional circumstances, Kirk Sessions of a vacant congregation may proceed to appoint a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing a minister to fill the vacancy using audio-visual technology.

3.1 The Kirk Session shall meet using audio-visual technology to consider steps to filling a vacancy in the congregation. If they consider the time is right for this, they will appoint a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing a minister.

3.2 The Kirk Session will give due intimation of the congregational meeting to all communicant members and supporting adherents and shall ensure that they are all informed of the meeting and of its purpose.

3.3 The Kirk Session shall explain to members and adherents that the meeting will take place using audio-visual technology. They shall ensure that arrangements are made for members and adherents who do not have access to audio-visual technology to connect with the meeting using landline or mobile telephone. They shall issue a separate document explaining how to join the meeting and how to participate in the meeting for the purposes of the election.

3.4 At the congregational meeting, the Moderator will call for nominations to fill the vacancy in the usual way. Communicant members and supporting adherents will show their support of nominations when asked to do by raising their hand and keeping their hands raised until such time as the Moderator and Clerk have recorded the number of votes. Communicants and adherents participating in the meeting using landline or mobile telephone will declare their support verbally.

3.5 On the successful completion of the election process, and on their being a clear majority support for one nomination to fill the vacancy, the Kirk Session shall decide to ask the Presbytery to moderate in a Closed Call.

3.6 The Kirk Session shall report to the Presbytery on the congregational meeting, giving details of the process of informing all communicant members and adherents of the meeting and also giving details of the process of informing the regarding participation in the meeting.

4. *Meetings to Moderate a Call.* The General Assembly declare that, where a Congregation requests Presbytery to Moderate in a Call, and Presbytery agrees that exceptional circumstances exist, the Presbytery shall conduct the meeting to moderate the call via audio-visual technology.

4.1 The Presbytery shall receive a report from the Kirk Session and shall satisfy itself that the steps outlined in Section 3 above have been followed without any detriment to the rights of the people in electing a minister. The Presbytery shall record its satisfaction with this report before proceeding to appoint a meeting to moderate in a Call.

4.2 In order for a meeting to Moderate a Call to be conducted by audio-visual technology, the call must be a Closed Call with the name of the Minister or Probationer agreed and elected by the congregation and inserted in the Call.

4.3 A form of Mandate should be prepared and circulated to each communicant member of the congregation and any adherents who wish to sign the Concurrence in Call.

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- 4.4. The Form of Mandate shall authorise one of the Elders of the congregation to sign the Form of Call or the concurrence in Call on behalf of the member or adherent.
- 4.5. During the meeting to Moderate the Call there should be a facility for the Presbytery to meet apart from the wider congregation (either a separate conference or placing the congregation on Hold while the Presbytery meeting).
- 4.6. The Kirk Session will submit to the Presbytery written confirmation that every communicant on the Roll has had the opportunity to complete a mandate form before the Presbytery proceeds to moderate in the Call. The Kirk Session shall also report on the opportunity given to adherents and regular worshippers in the congregation to sign a mandate for concurrence in the Call.
- 4.7. The meeting to Moderate the Call will be conducted as normal via audio-visual technology.
- 4.8. At the point where Members and Adherents would normally be invited to sign the Form of Call or the Concurrence in Call, the Elder authorised to sign mandates will sign on behalf of all members and adherents who have granted authority to do so.
- 4.9. The Presbytery shall consider the Call and, if they decide to sustain the call, the Presbytery Clerk will report to the Congregation and call for any dissents which can either be made via the technology or if some members of the congregation are merely watching a live-stream a telephone number of the Presbytery Clerk can be provided for dissents. If the Presbytery Clerk provides a telephone number for dissents, they must wait 5 minutes before proceeding in case there are any delays in the technology.
5. *Licensing.* The General Assembly declare that, where exceptional circumstances exist, a Presbytery may decide to conduct the Licensing of a candidate to preach the Gospel via audio-visual technology.
- 5.1. The Presbytery may carry out both the trials for licence, and the Presbytery meeting to license the candidate, via technology.
- 5.2. The Presbytery shall carry out the trials licensing process in line with the recognised practice with meetings conducted according to the general principles outlined in Section 1 above.
- 5.3. On successful completion of the trials for licence, the Presbytery will proceed to the signing of the Formula in accordance with the procedure outlined in Section 2 of this Act.
6. *Inductions.* The General Assembly declare that, where exceptional circumstances exist, a Presbytery may decide to proceed with the induction of a minister using audio-visual technology.
- 6.1. The Presbytery shall proceed with the induction service according to the Church's recognised practice with two exceptions.
- 6.2.1. Firstly, when the Presbytery Clerk reads the Second Edict calling for anyone who is prepared to substantiate objections to the life or doctrine of the Probationer or Minister, he shall provide a telephone number for the raising of any objections and wait 5 minutes before proceeding in case there are any delays in the technology.
- 6.2.2. Secondly, asking of the Questions and signing of the Formula will be conducted in accordance with the procedure outlined in Section 2 of this Act.
7. *Ordinations.* The General Assembly, notwithstanding the fact that the laying on of hands is an essential element in the Church's current process for ordination to the office of the holy ministry, declare that in exceptional circumstances it shall be competent for Presbyteries to proceed as follows.
- 7.1. When the Presbytery has sustained a Call to a Probationer according to the process outlined in Section 3 of this Act, the Presbytery may decide to proceed with the ordination process with the use of audio-visual technology.
- 7.2. The Presbytery shall then follow the procedure outlined in Section 5 of this Act with regard to trials for licence for students for the purpose of completing the trials for ordination.
- 7.3. The induction service will be carried out as outlined in Section 6 of this Act.

7.4. Having satisfactorily answered the Questions and signed the Formula, the Presbytery shall proceed with the prayer and declaration of ordination after which the person is formally inducted to the congregation and granted a seat in the Presbytery.

7.5. As soon as possible after the exceptional circumstances have ended and the Presbytery is able to meet in the normal way, they shall conduct a service of dedication when the Moderator will lead the Presbytery in prayer and when they will lay hands on the individual before the gathered congregation.

8. *Additional Regulations.* The General Assembly declare as follows regarding additional regulations.

8.1 In exceptional circumstances where people are unable to physically gather for constituted meetings, the Assembly Clerks Office is empowered to make regulations consistent with this Act for the conducting of any Church business via technology in accordance with the principles of the Free Church of Scotland making suitable accommodation to the exceptional circumstances.

8.2 Such regulations must be communicated to each Presbytery Clerk and made widely available to the Church.

8.3 Any regulations made under this Act will be reviewable by the General Assembly or the Commission of the Assembly.

9. *Restrictions.* The General Assembly declare that the provisions of this Act are for exceptional and emergency situations only and not to be adopted for meetings of Church courts in normal circumstances.

4. Edinburgh Theological Seminary. The General Assembly then called for the Report of the Edinburgh Theological Seminary which being printed and in the hands of members, was referred to by the Convenor, Rev. Malcolm Maclean who addressed the Assembly.

4.1. First Motion. It was moved and seconded that:

1. The General Assembly thank Principal Martin, the Course Organisers and the Lecturers for their instruction of students during the past academic year.

2. The General Assembly thank Dr Alastair Wilson and those who helped him in the Centre for Mission during the past academic year.

3. The General Assembly thank Mrs Heather Watson and Mrs Ruth Smith for fulfilling their various roles in the running of ETS.

4. The General Assembly thank Mr Graham Keith and Mr Murdo MacPhail for their faithful contribution to the work of the ETS Board for the last eight years.

5. The General Assembly thank Principal Martin for his contribution to the growth of ETS. They renew his appointment as Principal according to the terms of Act 32, Class 2, 2015, as amended by Act 16, Class 2, 2019, for a further five years.

6. The General Assembly note that Paragraph 3.1.6.4 of Act 16, Class 2, 2019 regarding Governance of ETS is inconsistent with Paragraph 3.1 of Act 26, Class 2, 2014 regarding Staffing Arrangements for ETS in that it states that 'It will be the responsibility of the Seminary Board to oversee and determine the appointment of lecturing staff at the Seminary'. They instruct that Paragraph 3.1.6.4 of Act 16, Class 2, 2019 be deleted and that the following paragraphs be renumbered accordingly.

7. The General Assembly also note the inconsistency between Paragraph 3.1 of Act 26, Class 2, 2014 regarding Staffing Arrangements for ETS and Paragraph 6.14 of the same Act in that it states that 'The General Assembly will have the final authority over appointments.' They instruct that this sentence be deleted from Paragraph 6.14 and that the revised Paragraph 6.14 should read as follows: 'The Seminary Board will include in its report to the General Assembly, all courses together with Course Organisers, Part-time Core Lecturers and Module lecturers.'

8. The General Assembly commend the ETS Board for its progress in trying to identify a Course Organiser for the Church History Department at Edinburgh Theological Seminary.

4.2. Second Motion. It was moved and seconded that Paragraphs 6-8 of the proposed Deliverance be deleted and replaced with the following:

6. The General Assembly amend Paragraph 3.1 of Act 26, Class 2, 2014 regarding Staffing Arrangements for ETS to read 'It will be the responsibility of the Seminary Board to oversee the appointment of lecturing staff at the Seminary and, in the case of appointing a full time Course Organiser, the Seminary Board will bring a sole nominee for appointment to the General Assembly or its Commission. The final appointment of a full time Course Organiser will be made by the General Assembly or its Commission. If the General Assembly or its Commission do not agree to the appointment of the Seminary Board's sole nominee, the Seminary Board will be instructed to restart the appointment process. [Alternative nominees will not be accepted from the floor of the Assembly or its Commission].

7. The General Assembly also amend Paragraph 6.12 of Act 26, Class 2, 2014 regarding Staffing Arrangements for ETS by deleting the sentence saying, "The final responsibility for all appointments (Course Organisers and Part-time Core Lecturers) lies with the Seminary Board." Paragraph 6.12 now reads "Whilst the Course Organiser may exercise discretion to invite guest lecturers on an occasional basis, he does not have the authority to appoint a Part-time Core Lecturer in his subject except on a temporary replacement basis in the case of an emergency or due to ill health."

8. The General Assembly also amend Paragraph 6.14 to of Act 26, Class 2, 2014 regarding Staffing Arrangements for ETS read 'The Seminary Board will include in its report to the General Assembly all courses together with Course Organisers, Part-time Core Lecturers and Module lecturers. The General Assembly, or its Commission, will have the final authority over appointments.'

9. The General Assembly note that Paragraph 3.1.6.4 of Act 16, Class 2, 2019 regarding Governance of ETS is inconsistent with Paragraph 3.1 of Act 26, Class 2, 2014 regarding Staffing Arrangements for ETS. They instruct that Paragraph 3.1.6.4 of Act 16, Class 2, 2019 be deleted and that the following paragraphs be renumbered accordingly.

4.3. The Finding. On a vote being taken between the Second Motion and the First Motion the First Motion carried and the finding of the Assembly was as follows:

1. The General Assembly thank Principal Martin, the Course Organisers and the Lecturers for their instruction of students during the past academic year.

2. The General Assembly thank Dr Alastair Wilson and those who helped him in the Centre for Mission during the past academic year.

3. The General Assembly thank Mrs Heather Watson and Mrs Ruth Smith for fulfilling their various roles in the running of ETS.

4. The General Assembly thank Mr Graham Keith and Mr Murdo MacPhail for their faithful contribution to the work of the ETS Board for the last eight years.

5. The General Assembly thank Principal Martin for his contribution to the growth of ETS. They renew his appointment as Principal according to the terms of Act 32, Class 2, 2015, as amended by Act 16, Class 2, 2019, for a further five years.

6. The General Assembly note that Paragraph 3.1.6.4 of Act 16, Class 2, 2019 regarding Governance of ETS is inconsistent with Paragraph 3.1 of Act 26, Class 2, 2014 regarding Staffing Arrangements for ETS in that it states that 'It will be the responsibility of the Seminary Board to oversee and determine the appointment of lecturing staff at the Seminary'. They instruct that Paragraph 3.1.6.4 of Act 16, Class 2, 2019 be deleted and that the following paragraphs be renumbered accordingly.

7. The General Assembly also note the inconsistency between Paragraph 3.1 of Act 26, Class 2, 2014 regarding Staffing Arrangements for ETS and Paragraph 6.14 of the same Act in that it states that 'The General Assembly will have the final authority over appointments.' They instruct that this sentence be deleted from Paragraph 6.14 and that the revised Paragraph 6.14 should read as follows: 'The Seminary Board will include in its report to the General Assembly, all courses together with Course Organisers, Part-time Core Lecturers and Module lecturers.'

8. The General Assembly commend the ETS Board for its progress in trying to identify a Course Organiser for the Church History Department at Edinburgh Theological Seminary.

5. Mission Board. The General Assembly then called for the Report of the Mission Board which being printed and in the hands of members, was referred to by the Chairman, Rev. Dr Robert J. Akroyd who addressed the Assembly.

5.1. The Finding. It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Northern Presbytery regarding a five-year terminable/renewable appointment for the congregation of Golspie and, noting the recommendation of the Mission Board, grant its crave. They terminate the current Alternative Ministerial Arrangements under the terms of Act 13, Class 2, 2014. They grant permission to the congregation of Golspie to appoint a Minister on a five-year terminable/renewable appointment in accordance with the terms of Act 1, Class 1, 2018 anent The Sustentation Fund, Paragraph 3.4 subject to the submission of a development plan to the satisfaction of the Mission Board. They appoint Rev. Eric Paterson to the congregation of Golspie in accordance with Act 1, Class 1, 2018, anent the Sustentation Fund and they declare that his appointment be continuous with his original induction to the charge.

6. Board of Ministry. The General Assembly then called for the Report of the Board of Ministry which being printed and in the hands of members, was referred to by the Chairman, Rev. Angus MacRae who addressed the Assembly.

6.1. The Finding. It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Board of Ministry and thank the Board, especially the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and those completing their period of service with the Board.

2. The General Assembly note with sadness the sudden passing of Rev. Dr David E.C. Ford, formerly Clerk to the Board of Ministry, and give thanks for his varied, diligent and faithful contributions to the Kingdom of God. They commend his family to the grace and care of Almighty God.

3. The General Assembly thank Rev. Alex J. MacDonald, the *Pastoral Support Worker*, and all the consultants and advisors who assist the Board of Ministry and all who facilitate In-Service Training.

4. The General Assembly call on the whole Church to continue to pray that God would raise up many more gospel workers for the urgent spiritual needs of our times.

5. The General Assembly note the matters under ongoing review by the Board of Ministry and invite the Board to report to future meetings of the General Assembly or the Commission of Assembly on their activities and future intentions.

6. The General Assembly note the comments of the Board of Ministry on the Board's membership. They amend Paragraph 1.2.3 of Act 6, Class 2, 2014, as amended by Act, 12, Class 2, 2015, Act 17, Class 2, 2016, Act 12, Class 2, 2019, and Act 15, Class 2, 2019, to read as follows:

'Ten members in total including the Principal of Edinburgh Theological Seminary *ex officio*, one additional member of the College Senate appointed annually by them on an *ex officio* basis, and one additional member who shall be a minister in a Training Congregation nominated by the Board of Ministry. The remaining membership shall comprise three ministers and four elders appointed by the General Assembly for a four-year term renewable for one further term of four years. The Chairman shall be appointed from the membership of the Board by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The quorum shall be three members of the Board. The Board shall be empowered to appoint Consultants and Advisors as required, particularly to liaise closely with the Mission Board and to assist with interviews and other functions of the Board.'

7. The General Assembly appoint Rev. Derek Lamont to the membership of the Board as the representative of training congregations for a four-year term renewable for one further term of four years according to the terms of appointment in Act 6, Class 2, 2014, Paragraph 1.2.3.

7. Board of Ministry – Supplementary Report. The General Assembly then called for the Supplementary Report of the Board of Ministry which being printed and in the hands of members, was referred to by the Chairman, Rev. Angus Macrae who addressed the Assembly.

The General Assembly met in private.

The General Assembly took up consideration of an application for admission to the Free Church ministry from Rev. Dr Euan G. Dodds. Confidential documents regarding the application were read to the Assembly by Mr MacRae as he presented the Board's report.

7.1. The Finding. It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

1. The General Assembly receive the application from Rev. Dr Euan George Dodds. They admit him as an ordained minister of the Free Church of Scotland, with effect from 18th May 2020, and following his satisfactory response to the prescribed Questions and his signing of the Formula before the General Assembly.
2. The General Assembly thereafter direct the Principal Clerk to add the name of Rev Dr Euan George Dodds to the register of Ministers without Charge available for Call.
3. The General Assembly order the supporting documents to be held *in retentis*.

The General Assembly met in open court.

7.2. Questions and Formula. Rev. Dr Euan G. Dodds was called into the Assembly. The Moderator welcomed him and announced to him the decision of the Assembly, informing him that his application to be accepted as a Minister of the Free Church of Scotland was successful. The Moderator proceeded to ask Dr Dodds the prescribed Questions for ordinands and ministers on admission to pastoral charges and, having given appropriate response to the Questions, Dr Dodds signed the Formula according to the process outlined in the draft Act on Arrangements in Exceptional Circumstances passed by the General Assembly earlier.

8. Board of Trustees. The General Assembly then called for the report of the Board of Trustees, which being printed and in the hands of members, was referred to by the Chairman, Mr. James Fraser who addressed the Assembly.

8.1. The Statement. The Chairman reported on the following statement of the Board of Trustees regarding the current COVID19 pandemic and potential risks to the Church:

The Board of Trustees has deferred reporting on its normal business in the light of the constraints under which the General Assembly meets. Instead, the Board wishes to make a statement in relation to the COVID-19 crisis and its impact upon the Church and on the business of the Board.

Since the inception of the crisis the Board set up a COVID Group to monitor and respond to the difficulties occasioned by the rapid onset of the pandemic. The work of the Board in this regard is summarised on the Free Church website. The Board's first priority was to ensure the continuation of the Church's ministry, congregation by congregation, within the constraints of lockdown. The Board is thankful to the Lord and Head of the Church, for the rapidity with which ministers have adopted technological means to continue as far as possible all the services which the church provides in normal times. Almost every Free Church congregation is now operating its services through videoconferencing and/or livestream. ETS has continued teaching by distance learning and as far as possible other areas of the Church have adapted to the constraints of a digitally enabled organisation. Indeed, many of our members are looking for new opportunities for spreading the gospel in the new environment. The Board wishes to commend ministers and members for their focus and, in that respect, is confident that the first priority has been achieved.

The Board's second priority is to ensure that the church receives the level of income which it needs to sustain its ministers in congregations, its training, mission and support functions. This is a challenging priority in a nation in lockdown. We are aware that some of our givers may experience loss of employment, business and income, and in such cases, we know that they have a duty to care for themselves and their families and may not be able to continue to donate to the Church. Indeed, we are encouraged by the fact that many congregations are setting up hardship funds to help brothers and sisters in this difficult situation. Added to this, we know that a large proportion of givings come through the collection plate and unless such donations are changed to an electronic method or to some other means, there is a danger that they be lost to the church.

It is too early to be precise about the likely effect of the crisis on our finances. A snapshot in April is not an adequate basis for a hard forecast; initial indications from scenario planning suggest that a medium forecast of loss of income, if unchecked, could lead to a deficit of around £1M in 2020. This scenario lies between a more optimistic and a more pessimistic scenario. The Board expects to be in a better position by end-June when these scenarios will be revised but meantime is adopting this as a working hypothesis.

Given a potential deficit of this magnitude, the Board believes that as a minimum each congregation should aim to remit at least the same amount of money in 2020 as it remitted, or should normally have remitted, in 2019 and wherever possible to exceed this figure. This target would allow the church to maintain its momentum and emerge from 2020 in good shape for the future. We want to resume in 2021 our ambitious targets for filling empty pulpits and planting new congregations. The Board will of course look at budgets and test expenditure. The Church is a lean organisation with a relatively small

proportion of discretionary expenditure and although it is always important to test costs it is unlikely that this will be a remedy for dealing with a shortfall in income.

“God is our refuge and our strength” and has taken our Church through severe times of crisis hitherto. He has answered the prayers of our faithful people and we have weathered crises before in our nation. The Board is confident that the Lord will take us through this crisis too. We therefore urge our people to continue to give as the Lord has prospered them and urge our congregations to maintain the 2019 remittances as the minimal threshold for 2020 and to exceed this wherever required or possible.

8.2. The Finding. It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

1. The General Assembly endorse the Board of Trustees’ ongoing scenario planning in relation to COVID-19 and instruct it to keep all matters under careful review.

2. The General Assembly remind congregations of the importance of monthly remittances and income reporting and instruct congregations to ensure that, as far as possible, these are up to date for period ending 31 May 2020.

3. The General Assembly instruct the Assembly Clerk to send the Board of Trustees Report and an extract from the proceedings of the General Assembly with the Assembly’s finding on the matter to all Deacons Courts, Finance Committees, and Presbyteries of the Church.

9. Thanks to Mr James Fraser. Mr. Scott Matheson, Chief Executive Officer, expressed his and the church’s thanks for Mr. Fraser’s 14 years of service as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Mr. Matheson praised Mr. Fraser’s work ethic, communication and man management skills, his energy, commitment and vision for the cause of the gospel.

10. Appointment of the 2021 General Assembly. The General Assembly appointed the next General Assembly to meet in Edinburgh on Monday 17th May 2021 at 6.00pm.

11. Minutes of Session. The Minutes of this Session were read and approved.

12. Adjournment. The General Assembly then adjourned to meet again at 9.00am on Tuesday 6th October 2020 of whereof public intimation having been given, the Session was closed with prayer.

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
HELD via ZOOM AUDIO -VISUAL TECHNOLOGY
ON
TUESDAY 6th OCTOBER 2020**

1. **Assembly Constituted.** By means of the Zoom audio-visual technology on 6th October 2020, which day the Ministers and Elders, Commissioners from Presbyteries appointed to meet this day, did again convene, and after devotions led by Rev. Donald G. Macdonald, Moderator of the 2020 General Assembly, the General Assembly was duly constituted.
2. **Revised Programme.** The General Assembly approved the revised Programme which had been distributed with Assembly papers.
3. **Loyal and Dutiful Address.** The General Assembly called for the Loyal and Dutiful Address to Her Majesty the Queen, which was given in by the Moderator. The Assembly approved the Address presented by the Moderator and appointed it to be duly signed and transmitted to the Secretary of State for Scotland, with a letter from the Clerk.

May it please Your Majesty

We, the Ministers and Elders of the Free Church of Scotland, met in General Assembly on the 6th day of October 2020, humbly offer Your Majesty the expression of our continued loyalty to Your Majesty's Person and Throne and to the Constitutional Monarchy of which you are the honoured Head and Representative.

We pray for Your Majesty's Parliaments in Westminster and Holyrood, committing to our Great God, the Prime Minister and the First Minister, and their respective Governments, in the many responsibilities that devolve upon Your Majesty's servants at home and abroad.

We recognise that the nation faces particular challenges during a time of global pandemic. We are grateful to Your Majesty for the address delivered from Windsor Castle in April, encouraging the nation to work together in the fight against the coronavirus. We are also thankful to Your Majesty's Governments for the effort made to protect the peoples of the United Kingdom from COVID-19. We mourn the loss of so many lives to this virus in our nation, and across the world. We acknowledge with gratitude, those employed within the National Health Service, home carers, and all essential workers, whose tireless work served all our communities during a time of lockdown.

We are thankful to God for the good recovery made by His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, from COVID-19. We continue to pray for the good health of Your Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh, and for the health of all the Royal Household.

We note the dutiful service of several members of Your Majesty's family, who assist in Your Royal and Constitutional duties and promote very many charities and good causes. In particular we celebrate the seventieth birthday of Her Royal Highness, Princess Anne, the Princess Royal, whose steadfast service to Your Majesty, and to the nation, continues to earn such admiration and respect.

We shared in Your Majesty's disappointment that the planned celebrations for the 75th anniversary of VE Day were not possible, but we thank Your Majesty for Your address marking the occasion, reminding us of the great sacrifices made by many to secure our freedom, and also for recognising that the nation's response to the current crisis revealed we were still a nation those brave soldiers, sailors and airmen would recognise and admire. We thank Your Majesty for the timely reminder to never give up and never despair.

As we remember the service and sacrifice made by many in previous conflicts, we also express our thankfulness for the continued service and sacrifice of all Your Majesty's Armed Forces, serving at home and abroad. We remember in our prayers all who have lost loved ones, and those who have suffered injury in mind and body. We thank Almighty God for the work of Your Majesty's chaplains to the Armed Forces, and the ministry of the Soldiers and Airmen's Scripture Readers Association. During a time of global instability, we continue to pray for peace.

Your Majesty, as Ministers and Elders of the Free Church of Scotland, be assured that we pray regularly for Your Majesty's person, family and governments. We commit ourselves and our congregations to do so willingly and as we are encouraged to do so by God's Word.

We give thanks to God for our Saviour, Jesus Christ, and our shared faith. The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.

So pray Your Majesty's most faithful subjects, the Ministers and Elders of the Free Church of Scotland, in General Assembly convened.

4. Assembly Clerks' Office. The General Assembly called for the Report of the Assembly Clerks' Office, which having been distributed to members, was referred to by the Principal Clerk, who addressed the Assembly.

4.1 The Finding. It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

(A) GENERAL

1. The General Assembly thank Rev. Paul Clarke and Mr James Fraser for their services to the Church on the Board of Trustees.
2. The General Assembly declare that the 2020 examination of the records of Presbyteries, Boards and Committees be cancelled. They instruct that arrangements be made for the examination of all records for years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 in time to report to the 2021 General Assembly.
3. The General Assembly continue the remit of the 2019 General Assembly and instruct the Assembly Clerks' Office to draw up draft proposals for a new Act of Assembly to replace Act 10, Class 2, 2006 regarding the Appointment and Employment of Presbytery Workers with such draft proposals to update, revise and clarify the provisions of Act 10, Class 2, 2006. They direct that the draft proposals be drawn up in conjunction with the Mission Board and the Board of Trustees and instruct the Assembly Clerks to report to the 2021 General Assembly on a proposed revision of the arrangements.
4. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll and grant its crave. They appoint Rev. David C. Meredith, Mission Director, and Rev. Nigel Anderson, minister at Livingston, to be General Assessors to the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll, with the appointments to be reviewed at the May 2023 General Assembly.
5. The General Assembly declare that Standing Orders as approved by the Assembly on 18th May 2020 be the Standing Orders for the 6th October 2020 Session of the Assembly.
6. The General Assembly declare that successful applicants for the Free Church ministry may answer the Questions and sign the Formula at the meeting of the Assembly subsequent to their application being accepted according to the process set out in Act 4, Class 2, May 2020, Paragraph 2.

(B) PROVINCIAL SYNODS

The General Assembly note the responses from Presbyteries to the Overture sent down according to the terms of the Barrier Act regarding the dissolution of Provincial Synods. They enact and ordain as follows:

The General Assembly, noting that annual statutory meetings of Provincial Synods have been suspended since 2009 General Assembly, and that the reduced number of Presbyteries in the Church has resulted in this tier of Church government becoming largely redundant, and desiring therefore that Provincial Synods be dissolved and removed from the governmental structure of the Church, ordain as follows with the consent of Presbyteries:

1. **Dissolution of Provincial Synods.** The General Assembly, noting that statutory meetings of Provincial Synods have been suspended since the 2009 General Assembly, and that Provincial Synods no longer have a meaningful purpose in the government of the Church due to reduction in the number of Presbyteries over the years, declare that Synods be dissolved with no prejudice to the review procedures regarding Complaints and Appeals, Petitions, and References.
2. **Review Procedures.** The General Assembly declare that the business of reviewing matters from Presbyteries now be directed to the Commissions of Assembly and finally to the General Assembly. They instruct that all future

meetings of the Commissions of Assembly be empowered to receive appeals, complaints, petitions and references from individuals and from the lower courts of the Church.

2.1 The General Assembly declare that the procedure for the submission of papers, etc., regarding references, appeals, complaints, and petitions be such that these be forwarded to the Principal Clerk of Assembly for inclusion in the business of the Assembly or its Commissions. They instruct the Principal Clerk to bring all such papers to the attention of the Assembly Business Committee who will bring a recommendation to the Assembly or to its Commissions on the acceptability and relevance of all papers.

2.2 The General Assembly declare that the final decision regarding the reception of papers, etc., associated with references, appeals, complaints, and petitions will rest with the Assembly and its Commissions and that it shall be competent to submit amendments to the Committee's proposal at the time at which its report is taken up for consideration.

2.3 The General Assembly affirm that in general terms the findings of the Commissions of Assembly are final and not subject to appeal. However, they declare that, in the case of Complaints and Appeals, Petitions, and References, it shall be competent for parties in the review process to appeal to the General Assembly.

3. **Examination of Records.** The General Assembly instruct that Presbytery records be submitted for examination to the General Assembly Business Committee annually by 31st March. They instruct the Business Committee to examine the records at its annual April meeting and to report on the examination to the next General Assembly.

4. **Financial Arrangements.** The General Assembly instruct all Synods to meet in order to make suitable arrangements for the allocation of funds held in the name of the Synod.

4.1 **General Funds.** The General Assembly direct that, where monies are held in a general account in the name of the Synod, such funds be divided equally between the Presbyteries of the Synod.

4.2 **Bursary Funds.** The General Assembly further direct that, where funds are held by the Synod in restricted funds such as bursary accounts and grant-aid accounts, Synods make suitable arrangements for the administration of such fund by the Central Offices of the Church. They instruct the Central Offices to arrange the dispersal of such funds according to the terms of the deeds of the funds. They also instruct the Central Offices to ensure that bursaries or grant aid are advertised to students in Edinburgh Theological Seminary and any others who are engaged in post-graduate studies who may qualify for financial support from the terms of the bursaries or grants.

4.3 **Reporting.** The General Assembly instruct each Synod to report to the Assembly Clerks' Office on the completion of the financial re-arrangements set out in Paragraph 4.1 and 4.2 and to do so not later than 31st December 2020. They instruct the Assembly Clerk to report accordingly to the next General Assembly.

5. **Dissolution.** The General Assembly declare that Provincial Synods be dissolved and that the provisions of this Act are implemented as soon as possible after the rising of the 2021 General Assembly.

6. **Repeal.** The General Assembly repeals all Acts of the General Assembly relevant to the constitution of Synods, the re-organisation of Synods and to general meetings of Synod.

5. **Board of Ministry.** The General Assembly called for the Report of the Board of Ministry, which being printed and in the hands of members, was referred to by the Chairman, Rev. Paul Clarke, who addressed the Assembly.

5.1 **The Finding.** It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Board of Ministry and thank the Board, especially the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for their work.

2. The General Assembly thank Rev. Alex J. MacDonald the Pastoral Support Worker and all the consultants and advisers who assist the Board of Ministry and all who facilitate the In-Service Training.

3. The General Assembly call on the whole Church to continue to pray that God would raise up many more gospel workers for the urgent spiritual needs of our times.

4. The General Assembly note the ongoing activities of the Board of Ministry, including the creation of a ‘Student Team’ and a ‘Ministers Team’ to further its work, and invite the Board to report to future meetings of the General Assembly or the Commission of Assembly on its activities and future intentions.

5. The General Assembly agree to meet in private session to take up and dispose of Supplementary Reports from the Board of Ministry concerning Applications for Admission to Free Church ministry from the Rev. Benjamin Fiddian, and Rev. Douglas Cranston, including the signing of the Formula should the applications be successful.

6. Board of Ministry – Supplementary Report. The General Assembly then called for the Supplementary Report of the Board of Ministry which being printed and in the hands of members, was referred to by the Chairman, Rev. Paul Clarke who addressed the Assembly.

The General Assembly met in private.

The General Assembly took up consideration of applications for admission to the Free Church ministry from Rev. Benjamin Fiddian and Rev. Douglas Cranston. Confidential documents regarding the applications were read to the Assembly by Mr Clarke as he presented the Board’s report.

6.1 Rev. Douglas Cranston

1. The General Assembly receive the application for the Free Church ministry from Rev. Douglas Cranston. They admit him as an ordained minister of the Free Church of Scotland, on receiving satisfactory responses to the prescribed Questions and his signing of the Formula before the General Assembly.

2. The General Assembly thereafter direct the Principal Clerk to add the name of Rev. Douglas Cranston to the Register of Retired Ministers.

3. The General Assembly direct that documents supporting the application to be held *in retentis*.

6.2 Rev. Benjamin Fiddian

1. The General Assembly receive the application for the Free Church ministry from Rev. Benjamin Fiddian. They admit him as an ordained minister of the Free Church of Scotland, on receiving satisfactory responses to the prescribed Questions and his signing of the Formula before the General Assembly.

2. The General Assembly thereafter direct the Principal Clerk to add the name of Rev. Benjamin Fiddian to the register of Ministers without Charge Available for Call.

3. The General Assembly direct that documents supporting the application to be held *in retentis*.

The General Assembly met in open court.

6.3 Questions and Formula. Rev. Douglas Cranston and Rev. Benjamin Fiddian were called into the Assembly. The Moderator welcomed them and announced to them the decision of the Assembly, informing them that their applications to be accepted as a Minister of the Free Church of Scotland were successful. The Moderator proceeded to ask Mr Cranston and Mr Fiddian the prescribed Questions for ordinands and ministers on admission to pastoral charges and, having given appropriate response to the Questions, Mr Cranston and Mr Fiddian Dodds signed the Formula according to the process outlined in Act 2, Class 2, 2020 regarding Arrangements in Exceptional Circumstances. The Moderator then called on Rev. Angus MacRae to lead the Assembly in prayer.

7. Edinburgh Theological Seminary. The General Assembly called for the Report of Edinburgh Theological Seminary, which having been distributed to members, was referred to by the Chairman, Rev. Dr Malcolm Maclean, who addressed the Assembly.

7.1 The Finding. It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

(A) GENERAL

1. The General Assembly thank the Board for its work on behalf of Edinburgh Theological Seminary.

2. The General Assembly thank Principal Martin for his leadership of Edinburgh Theological Seminary.

3. The General Assembly thank the Professors and Lecturers who have given instruction in the various departments of Edinburgh Theological Seminary during the current period of crisis connected to COVID 19.
4. The General Assembly also thank Mrs Heather Watson and the administrative staff for their contribution to the work of the Seminary.
5. The General Assembly congratulate Principal Emeritus Donald Macleod for his recently published volume on Scottish Church History.

(B) ETS CENTRE OF MISSION

1. The General Assembly thank Dr Alistair Wilson for his work as Coordinator of the Centre for Mission.
2. The General Assembly also thanks the other lecturers and speakers who contributed to the various activities of the Centre for Mission.

(C) CHURCH HISTORY PROGRAMME LEADER / LECTURER

1. The General Assembly approve the appointment of an MTh Programme Leader / Lecturer in the department of Church History at ETS instead of the appointment of a *Church* History Course Organiser.
2. The General Assembly declare that the Programme Leader / Lecturer may be male or female and that the person will be appointed based on suitability and qualifications for the post. They declare that the appointee should hold a relevant doctorate and, if possible, some track record of relevant publications.
3. The General Assembly declare that the Programme Leader / Lecturer's responsibilities shall include providing supervision in MTh (Taught) in Scottish Church History and Theology, engaging in research and publications, particularly in the field of Scottish Church History, assisting in the delivery of lectures, seminars and tutorials in the Church History Department, assisting in the general administration responsibilities at ETS, and providing pastoral and academic support to BTh and MTh students.
4. The General Assembly declare that the Programme Leader / Lecturer will work alongside the Director of Post Graduate studies in supervising post graduate students and will work within existing BTh structures in delivering an agreed programme of lectures under the management of the Principal.
5. The General Assembly declare that the Programme Leader / Lecturer in Church History must be a communicant member under the pastoral discipline of a Reformed Church, shall give unqualified subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith, and shall be in full sympathy with the doctrinal position of the Free Church.
6. The General Assembly declare that the Programme Leader / Lecturer will be a full-time member of staff at ETS and have a seat on the Senate.
7. The General Assembly instruct the Assembly Clerks to examine all Acts of Assembly relating to ETS staff and to revise and update the relevant Acts to ensure consistency and accuracy in the light of recent changes. They instruct the Clerks to report on this exercise to the 2021 General Assembly.
8. **Board of Trustees.** The General Assembly called for the Report of Board of Trustees, which having been distributed to members, was referred to by Rev. David Meredith who addressed the Assembly.

8.1 First Motion. It was moved and seconded that:

(A) CORONAVIRUS

1. The General Assembly thank the Board for fulfilling its remit in assessing the risks facing the Church as a result of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. They also thank the Board's COVID-19 Group for its advice and guidance and remind all Kirk Sessions to comply with COVID-19 Group guidance as the situation develops.
2. The General Assembly instruct the Board through its COVID-19 Group to continue its diligence in assessing risks facing the Church during the current crisis. They instruct them to take such steps as are necessary to mitigate identified risks to public health and to the reputation of the Church.

3. The General Assembly commend the UK and Scottish Governments to the ongoing prayers of the Church as they continue to navigate the coronavirus crisis. They thank the NHS and other organisations for the care and support given to those affected and their families.

4. The General Assembly note the Board's oversight of finances during the pandemic and urge Treasurers, Deacons' Courts and Finance Committees to ensure that remittances and income reports are submitted monthly to the church offices. They encourage the members of the church to continue to give in accordance with how the Lord has prospered them.

8.2 Second Motion. It was moved and seconded that the following be added as new Paragraph 5 in the Proposed Deliverance:

The General Assembly record their concern over the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and its impact on the overall health and wellbeing of our people as well as its impact on the national economy. They note with sadness the spiritual and moral decline of recent times and the apparent failure to acknowledge the name of our God and to reach out to Him for help as the crisis worsens at this time. They appoint a day of prayer to be observed in all congregations on 25th October 2020. They call on the Church to pray to Almighty God for His merciful intervention to suppress the coronavirus, to give recovery and good health to those who suffer, to comfort those who have endured loss, to turn the hearts of our people in repentance to the Lord our God, and for the Spirit of God to bless the preaching of the gospel. They instruct the Mission Board to coordinate this day of prayer in addition to the National Day of Prayer appointed to be observed on 25th November 2020.

8.3 The Finding. With the permission of the Assembly, Mr Meredith accepted the proposed addendum and the finding of the General Assembly was as follows:

1. The General Assembly thank the Board for fulfilling its remit in assessing the risks facing the Church as a result of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. They also thank the Board's COVID-19 Group for its advice and guidance and remind all Kirk Sessions to comply with COVID-19 Group guidance as the situation develops.

2. The General Assembly instruct the Board through its COVID-19 Group to continue its diligence in assessing risks facing the Church during the current crisis. They instruct them to take such steps as are necessary to mitigate identified risks to public health and to the reputation of the Church.

3. The General Assembly commend the UK and Scottish Governments to the ongoing prayers of the Church as they continue to navigate the coronavirus crisis. They thank the NHS and other organisations for the care and support given to those affected and their families.

4. The General Assembly note the Board's oversight of finances during the pandemic and urge Treasurers, Deacons' Courts and Finance Committees to ensure that remittances and income reports are submitted monthly to the church offices. They encourage the members of the church to continue to give in accordance with how the Lord has prospered them.

5. The General Assembly record their concern over the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and its impact on the overall health and wellbeing of our people as well as its impact on the national economy. They note with sadness the spiritual and moral decline of recent times and the apparent failure to acknowledge the name of our God and to reach out to Him for help as the crisis worsens at this time. They appoint a day of prayer to be observed in all congregations on 25th October 2020. They call on the Church to pray to Almighty God for His merciful intervention to suppress the coronavirus, to give recovery and good health to those who suffer, to comfort those who have endured loss, to turn the hearts of our people in repentance to the Lord our God, and for the Spirit of God to bless the preaching of the gospel. They instruct the Mission Board to coordinate this day of prayer in addition to the National Day of Prayer appointed to be observed on 25th November 2020.

9. Mission Board. The General Assembly called for the Report of Mission Board, which having been distributed to members, was referred to by Rev. Dr R. Ackroyd who addressed the Assembly.

9.1. The Finding. It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

(A) LOCALLY SUBSIDISED ARRANGEMENTS

1. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll regarding the appointment of a five-year reviewable appointment for the congregation of Dunblane and, noting the recommendation of the Mission Board, grant its crave. They terminate the locally subsidised arrangements for ministry at Dunblane under the provisions of Act 14, Class 2, 2013. They declare that the appointment of the current minister, Rev. Allan Shearer, be on the basis of

a five-year reviewable appointment according to the Act 1, Class 1, 2018, Paragraph 3.4, and that his appointment be continuous with his original induction to the charge. They repeal Act 22, Class 2, May 2019.

(B) ASSISTANTSHIPS

1. The General Assembly receive the request from the congregation of Glasgow City Free Church and the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll regarding the revocation of the permission to call an Assistant Minister and, noting the recommendation of the Mission Board, grant the request. They revoke the permission of the congregation of Glasgow City Free Church to appoint an Assistant Minister and they terminate the remittance arrangement required by Act 18, Class 2, 2013 anent Assistantships with immediate effect. They repeal Act 18, Class 2, 2019.

10. March 2021 Commission of Assembly. The General Assembly appointed the next Commission of Assembly to meet in Edinburgh on Wednesday 3rd March 2021 at 7.00pm as follows:

The General Assembly hereby appoint a Commission consisting of all the members of this General Assembly along with Rev. Iver Martin named by the Moderator to be their Commission.

1. **Meetings.** This Commission is appointed to meet at Edinburgh on Wednesday 3rd March 2021 at 7 o'clock in the evening, and at other times and places as may be required with power to choose their own Moderator.

1.1. *Exceptional Circumstances.* The General Assembly declare that it shall be competent for the Commission to meet virtually under the provisions of Act 4, Class 2, 2020 should the current COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings still be in force at the time.

1.2. *Quorum.* The quorum shall be any twelve or more of their number, of whom four at least are always to be ministers.

1.3. *Business.* Items of business to be included in the Note of Business of the Commission shall be submitted to the Assembly Clerks' Office at least ten days before the Commission is due to meet.

1.4. *Church Courts.* The General Assembly declare that no other Court of the Church may meet on the dates on which the Assembly has appointed its Commission to meet.

1.5. *Continuance.* This Commission shall remain in being until another Commission is appointed. All members are required to attend the diets of the Commission.

2. **General Powers.** The General Assembly empower this Commission, or their quorum, to take up and dispose of any matter referred to them by the General Assembly or arising out of any Act or finding of the Assembly in accordance with the instructions given by the Assembly.

2.1 *Interests of the Church.* The Commission shall give attention to the interests of the Church in every respect to ensure that the Church does not suffer or incur any prejudice which it is possible for their powers to prevent, as they will be answerable.

2.2 *Public Questions.* The Commission shall give such a lead as they are able on moral issues and provide advice and assistance to Presbyteries, Board and Committees of the General Assembly, upon their making application.

2.3 *Exclusions.* The powers granted above shall not apply to particular affairs or processes before Presbyteries which have only a local relevance and have no reference to the whole Church.

2.4 *Review.* The General Assembly empower this Commission, or their quorum, to receive appeals, complaints, petitions and references from individuals and from the lower courts of the Church, and all such matters as were previously directed to Provincial Synods.

2.5 *Procedure.* The General Assembly declare that the procedure for the submission of papers, etc., regarding references, appeals, complaints, and petitions be such that these be forwarded to the Principal Clerk of Assembly for inclusion in the business of the Commission as this is set out in the 2020 Act on the Dissolution of Synods.

3. **Admissions.** The General Assembly empower this Commission, or their quorum, to receive applications for admission to the Free Church as follows.

3.1 *Applications from Ministers.* The said Commission is hereby authorised to receive and dispose of applications duly submitted through Presbyteries and the Board of Ministry from ministers of other denominations seeking admission to the Free Church ministry

3.2 *Applications from Congregations.* The said Commission is authorised to receive and dispose of applications through Presbyteries from any congregation wishing to join the Free Church of Scotland submitted in accordance with the procedures laid down by the General Assembly.

3.3 *Ministerial Rolls.* The said Commission is authorised to receive and dispose of petitions received from Presbyteries regarding the transference of the name of a minister from the Roll of Resigned Ministers to the Roll of Ministers Without Charge Eligible for Call.

4. **Mission Board.** The General Assembly empower this Commission, or their quorum, to receive applications from the Mission Board as follows.

4.1 *Church Development.* The said Commission is empowered to receive and dispose of applications from preaching stations and church plants to be raised to fully sanctioned charges submitted through the Mission Board.

4.2 *Consolidation.* The said Commission is empowered to receive and dispose of applications from the Mission Board to link or unite two or more congregations following upon a Report from Board.

4.3 *Global Mission.* The said Commission is empowered to receive and dispose of applications from the Mission Board to appoint Ministers and workers in fulfilling the Church's commitment to global mission following a report from the Board.

5. **Limited Powers.** The General Assembly declare that it is not competent for the Commission to become involved in matters other than those committed and referred to them as above. All their proceedings shall be conducted in accordance with the Acts and Constitution of the Church, avoiding anything which is contrary or prejudicial to such Acts and Constitution.

5.1 *Accountability.* The General Assembly further declare that in all their proceedings they shall be accountable to and censurable by next General Assembly as they may find reason arising from the above introduction to Paragraph 6.

5.2 *Appeals.* The General Assembly affirm that in general terms the findings of the Commission of Assembly are final and not subject to appeal. However, they declare that, in the case of Complaints, Appeals, Petitions, and References, it shall be competent for parties in the review process to appeal to the General Assembly.

11. **Protestations.** The Moderator called for protestations and none were declared.

12. **Minutes.** The Minutes of this Session were read, adjusted and approved.

13. **Thanks.** The Moderator thanked the Clerks, and Rev. Thomas Davis and Mr Alistair Oliver for hosting the meeting.

14. **Rising of the Assembly.** The General Assembly was declared dissolved and closed with prayer, the singing of Psalm 122 and the Benediction.



General Assembly Documents

Scottish Charity No: SC012925

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PERSONNEL

Rev. DONALD G. MACDONALD	Moderator
Rev. MALCOLM MACLEOD	Principal Clerk
Rev. NIGEL ANDERSON	Assistant Clerk
Rev. STEPHEN ALLISON	Assistant Clerk
Mr SCOTT MATHESON	Chief Executive Officer
Messrs BALFOUR + MANSON, LLP, EDINBURGH	Law Agents

REPORT
OF THE
ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

The Assembly Business Committee met using audio-visual technology on Thursday 16th April 2020.

(A) ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS

1. **Coronavirus.** The Committee noted the ongoing critical situation arising from the outbreak of the coronavirus in China in December 2019 and its subsequent spread across the globe, including the UK. The Government has imposed restriction on travel and group gatherings in an effort to control the spread of the virus.
2. **General Assembly.** The Government restrictions on travel, and the need to comply with social distancing regulations, has affected meetings of all congregations and Church courts as well as that of all Boards and Committees. The Business Committee agreed that the General Assembly should meet on Monday 18th May 2020 at 6.00pm for one Session only to take up urgent and time-critical business from Boards and Committees.
3. **Use of Technology.** In the current circumstances, the Committee agreed that the General Assembly should be constituted using the Zoom audio-visual technology platform hosted from Assembly Hall and with Commissioners joining the meeting through the Zoom platform. The Committee considered the use of Zoom and the concerns raised over the security of the platform. The Committee was satisfied that concerns over Zoom security would be addressed and steps taken to secure the meeting of the Assembly.
4. **A Future Meeting.** The Committee considered the best way of taking up the normal, non-urgent business of the General Assembly. It was agreed to recommend that the May 2020 Assembly adjourn on Monday 18th May at the close of business, appoint the 2020 General Assembly to meet again on Tuesday 6th October 2020 at 9.00am, and rise not later than 1.00pm on Thursday 8th October. It was also agreed to recommend that the Moderator and Principal Clerk be empowered to make alternative arrangements for the proposed October meeting should the current emergency situation and the restriction of public gatherings continue until then.
5. **Appointment of Moderator.** The Committee noted that Rev. Neil MacMillan was elected as Moderator-Designate of the 2020 General Assembly. The Committee considered the current pandemic emergency and the benefits of continuity in the role of the Moderator as well as the possibility of having to postpone the proposed October 2020 meeting of the General Assembly. It was therefore agreed to recommend that Rev. Donald G. Macdonald, Moderator of the 2019 General Assembly, be appointed as Moderator of the 2020 General Assembly and that Mr MacMillan's appointment be deferred until the May 2021 Assembly.
6. **2021 General Assembly.** The Committee discussed the appointment of the 2021 General Assembly and it was agreed that the appointment should be made at the close of business on Monday 18th May 2020 in order to ensure that the regular business of the Assembly should continue in the normal way and so that other denominations and organisations who visit the Assembly could make arrangements at the appropriate time.

(B) GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROGRAMME

1. **Assembly Programme.** The Committee approved a limited Programme for the General Assembly showing only urgent and time-critical items of business from the Board of Ministry, ETS and the Mission Board plus a report from the Assembly Clerks on nominations to Boards and Committees and draft proposals for various Presbytery meetings and procedures during the current emergency situation.
2. **Confidential Business.** The Assembly Clerk reported that the only item of business in the report of the Board of Ministry was an application for admission as a minister of the Free Church of Scotland, an item of business which is normally taken in private. The Chairman of the Board of Ministry will read out the usual summarised version of the application process so as to overcome the difficulty of sharing confidential information electronically.

3. **Question and Formula.** The Committee considered the procedure for a successful applicant for the Free Church Ministry answering the Questions and signing the Formula. It was agreed to recommend on this occasion that, due to the current exceptional circumstances, this process be completed during the General Assembly meeting of 18th May 2020 according to the procedure outlined in the Assembly Clerks' report.

(C) GENERAL ASSEMBLY DOCUMENTS

1. **General Assembly Roll.** The Roll of the General Assembly was noted by the Committee in its complete form.
2. **Commissions and Elders' Certificates.** The Committee noted that only ten Elders' Certificates had been received by the Principal Clerk. It was agreed to recommend to the General Assembly that the requirement for Elders' Certificates be waived for this Assembly in light of difficulties encountered by Kirk Sessions in arranging meetings.
3. **Standing Orders.** The Committee approved the revised and updated General Assembly Standing Orders. It was agreed to recommend that the Standing Orders be approved in their current form and on approval that Standing Orders be suspended with regard to the following items: B.1 – Elders' Certificates; C.3 – Examination of Presbytery Records; E.4 – Submission of Amendments and Addenda apart from Paragraph 1; E.14 – Examination of Presbytery Records; E.15 – Examination of Records of Boards and Committees; E.16 – Additional Assembly Committees.
4. **Act 33, Class 2, 2010.** The Committee noted the terms of Act 33, Class 2, 2010 regarding the Use of Modern Technology in Conducting Church Business. It was agreed to recommend that this Act be appended to Assembly Standing Orders for the purposes of the revised arrangements for the meeting of Assembly due on 18th May 2020 and that of 6th October 2020 if required.

(D) MISCELLANEOUS

1. **Committee on the Examination of Boards and Committee Records.** The Committee recommends that the examination of the records of Boards and Committees of the Church be remitted to the Assembly Clerks for examination when carrying out the examination of Presbytery records.
2. **Other Assembly Committees.** The Committee noted that two other Assembly Committees are appointed each year, namely the Committee to prepare a loyal and dutiful address to Her Majesty the Queen and the Lord High Commissioner Receiving Party. It was agreed that, in the current circumstances that there was no need to appoint these groups and it was agreed to recommend accordingly.
3. **Review of Appointments.** The Convener reported that consideration had been given to ministerial appointments which were due to be reviewed at the 2020 General Assembly. The Committee agreed to recommend that, in the circumstances, all such ministerial appointments, and the current terms of names of ministers on various Rolls of Ministers, be extended until the 2021 General Assembly.
4. **Presbytery Appointments.** The Committee noted the possible confusion regarding the appointment of Moderator of Presbytery and the election of Representative Elders at Presbytery and Synod arising from the fact that the 2020 General Assembly will meet again on 6th October 2020 and that such appointments and elections take place as soon as possible after the rising of the General Assembly. It was agreed to recommend that Presbyteries be instructed to proceed with reference to the date on which the May 2020 General Assembly adjourns, namely, the 18th May 2020.

MALCOLM MACLEOD, *Convener & Principal Clerk*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the report and thank the Committee.
2. The General Assembly humble calls on the whole Church to continue in prayer to Almighty God in the midst of the current coronavirus crisis. They call for prayer for all those affected by the virus and for the Government as it seeks to manage the spread of the virus. They give thanks to God for the NHS, for all key health care workers, and for other emergency services and commit them to God's care and protection.

(A) ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS

1. The General Assembly, noting the Government restrictions on travel and public gatherings, declare that the Assembly shall convene to take up urgent and time-critical business using the Zoom audio-visual technology platform.
2. The General Assembly declare that the Assembly shall convene for one session only on Monday 18th May 2020 at 6.00pm. They further declare that the General Assembly will adjourn on Monday 18th May 2020 to meet again on Tuesday 6th October 2020 at 9.00am in the Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, and to rise not later than 1.00pm on 8th October 2020. They empower the Moderator and the Principal Clerk, in consultation with the Business Committee, to make alternative arrangements should the current restrictions on social distancing and public gatherings still apply.
3. The General Assembly, noting the benefits of continuity in the role of Moderator at this time, and taking cognisance of the uncertainty regarding the Assembly meeting for normal business in this year, appoint Rev. Donald G. Macdonald, Moderator of the 2019 General Assembly, as Moderator of the 2020 General Assembly. They thank Mr Macdonald for his willingness to continue in the role of Moderator for a second year.
4. The General Assembly note that Rev. Neil MacMillan has been elected Moderator-Designate of the 2020 General Assembly. They declare that Mr MacMillan's election shall be valid for the purposes of appointing the Moderator of the 2021 General Assembly.
5. The General Assembly appoint the 2021 General Assembly to meet on Monday 17th May 2021 in the Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, at 6.00pm.

(B) GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROGRAMME

1. The General Assembly approve the draft Assembly programme containing only urgent and time-critical business as the programme for this Assembly.
2. The General Assembly declare that, when confidential business is taken up in the report of the Board of Ministry, related documents will be read out by the Chairman of the Board instead of being distributed to Commissioners.
3. The General Assembly, noting the current exceptional circumstances with the restrictions on large gatherings, declare that it shall be competent on this occasion to proceed as follows regarding the successful application for recognition as a minister of the Free Church of Scotland. They authorise the Moderator to proceed immediately to ask the successful applicant the Questions and, on receiving satisfactory answers to the Questions, to proceed to the signing of the Formula using the process outlined in the proposed deliverance of the Assembly Clerks' Report.

(C) GENERAL ASSEMBLY DOCUMENTS

1. The General Assembly record the Roll of the Assembly as distributed with Assembly papers.
2. The General Assembly declare that the need for the submission Elders' Certificates according to the terms of Act 8, 1853 as amended by Act 9, 1863, be waived for this Assembly in the light of the current COVID-19 crisis and its impact on meetings of Church courts.
3. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Standing Orders, distributed with Assembly papers, with Act 33, Class 2, 2010 appended, as the Standing Orders of this Assembly and for the meeting of 6th October 2020 as required.
4. The General Assembly declare that the following sections of Standing Orders be suspended for the 18th May 2020 Session of the Assembly: B.1 – Elders' Certificates; C.3 – Examination of Presbytery Records; E.4 – Submission of Amendments and Addenda apart from Paragraph 1; E.14 – Examination of Presbytery Records; E.15 – Examination of Records of Boards and Committees; E.16 – Additional Assembly Committees.

(D) MISCELLANEOUS

1. The General Assembly instruct the Assembly Clerks to examine the records of Boards and Committees and to report on this, and the examination of Presbytery records, to the October 2020 meeting of the Assembly.
2. The General Assembly declare that all ministerial appointment which are due for review in May 2020 be extended under the current terms until the 2021 General Assembly.
3. The General Assembly further declare that the fixed terms of all ministers on the Rolls of Ministers according to Act 8, Class 2, 2019 be extended until such time as revised and updated arrangements are approved by the 2021 General Assembly.
4. The General Assembly instruct Presbyteries to proceed with the appointment of Moderator and the election of Representative Elder at Presbytery and Synod according to the terms of Act 1, Class 1, 2019 and to do so with reference to 18th May 2020, the date on which the 2020 General Assembly will adjourn to meet again on 6th October 2020.

REPORT
OF THE
ASSEMBLY CLERKS' OFFICE

(A) NOMINATIONS

1. **Board of Trustees.** The 2019 General Assembly agreed to extend the term of Mr James Fraser on the Board of Trustees for another two years on the understanding that Mr Fraser would step down as Chairman of the Board at the 2020 General Assembly and that Mr Donald Forsyth would then take over as Chairman. We are thankful for Mr Forsyth's willingness to undertake this role and we are pleased to recommend accordingly. We are also thankful to Mr Fraser for his years of unstinting and faithful services to the Church as the Board's Chairman.
2. **Mission Board.** Rev. Calum MacMillan resigned from the Mission Board in March 2020. The Assembly Clerks recommend that Rev. Jeremy Ross be appointed to the Board in his place.
3. **Board of Ministry.** Rev. Angus MacRae completes his term on the Board of Ministry both as a member and as its Chairman. The Assembly Clerks recommend that Rev. Paul Clarke be appointed to the Board of Ministry as a member and as the Chairman.
4. **Judicial Commission.** The Assembly Clerks noted that the current conditions of Act 2, Class 1, 2010 relating to the Judicial Commission limit any member to two terms of four years and that those appointed shall be senior ministers and elders of the Church with at least ten years' experience of active service. Given such restrictions, the Clerks recommend that the terms of Act 2, Class 1, 2010, Paragraph 1.1 be change to the extent that limit on the number of terms of four-year terms be abolished but that members would still need to be re-appointed every four years.

(B) CONGREGATIONAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

1. **Submission of Reports & Accounts.** OSCR ask that, wherever possible, annual reports and accounts are submitted to them on time.
2. **Current Crisis.** The COVID-19 pandemic may impact congregational annual general meetings. However, OSCR have advised that charities holding meetings virtually, either over the telephone or using digital solutions, is acceptable to them in the current situation.
3. **Special Allowances.** If it is not possible for a congregation to hold its AGM virtually, the meeting should be postponed. OSCR will adopt an understanding and proportionate response to this as long as the report and accounts have been approved by the Deacons' Court or Finance Committee.

(C) ARRANGEMENTS IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

1. **Exceptional Circumstances.** The current coronavirus pandemic and the Government imposed lockdown has created exceptional circumstances in all areas of life. The restrictions on public gatherings and the social distancing regulations have created new norms for family life, Church life, and for the workplace. The burden of care undertaken by the NHS in treating those suffering from the virus is intense while staff and carers expose themselves to the danger of being infected by the virus. The social and economic impact in the present, and in the future, is impossible to measure and the recovery period is expected to be gradual and long.
2. **Great Commission.** The restrictions imposed by the Government in response to the coronavirus pandemic has impacted on how the Church operates in its Courts, Boards and Committees, and how we respond to the crisis in fulfilling the Great Commission. The work of the Gospel continues and for it to do so the Church must ensure that congregations have a fulltime pastoral ministry in so far as this is possible in accordance with General Assembly legislation.

3. **Special Arrangements.** The ongoing work of the gospel will inevitably lead to situations where students completing their studies will need to be licensed and ordained to the ministry, where congregations may wish to call a minister, where Presbyteries may receive requests to moderate in a call, and where Presbyteries at some later point may wish to carry out an induction service. In order to make provision in exceptional circumstances such as the present, and in order to regularise procedure in such circumstances, the Assembly Clerks propose the arrangements in the draft Act in Section (A) of the Proposed Deliverance. The proposal covers arrangements for answering the Questions signing the Formula, conducting a congregational meeting to elect a minister to fill a vacancy, moderating in a call to fill a vacancy, licensing of students for the ministry, ordination of probationers, and inductions.

MALCOLM MACLEOD, *Principal Clerk*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

(A) NOMINATIONS

1. The General Assembly note the resignation of Mr Calum MacMillan from the Mission Board and thank him for his services.
2. The General Assembly note that the term of Rev. Angus MacRae as member and Chairman of the Board of Ministry comes to an end at this Assembly. They thank Mr MacRae for his services to the Church on the Board of Ministry.
3. The General Assembly note that Mr James Fraser is stepping down as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. They thank Mr Fraser for his years of unstinting and faithful services to the Church as the Board's Chairman.
4. The General Assembly ordain that Paragraph 1.1 of Act 2, Class 1, 2020 regarding the Judicial Commission and its composition and membership be revised to read as follows: The Judicial Commission shall be appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation in the first instance of the Committee to Review Disciplinary Procedures and thereafter on the recommendation of the Board of Trustees. The Judicial Commission shall be comprised of 24 members, two ministers and two elders from each of the home Presbyteries, appointed for a term of four years, renewable annually by the General Assembly for a subsequent four-year term. Those appointed shall be senior ministers and elders of the church with at least 10 years' experience of active service. The General Assembly shall appoint one of the members of the Judicial Commission as Chairman.
5. The General Assembly appoint Rev. Paul Clarke to serve on the Board of Ministry as a member and as the Board's Chairman.
6. The General Assembly appoint the following membership of Boards, Committees and the Judicial Commission:
7. The General Assembly note that the figure in the year column in the tables below refers to the new year of service in a four-year term, and that the figure in the term column refers to which four-year term the year refers to. They appoint the following membership of Boards, Committees and the Judicial Commission:

Board of Ministry			Year	Term
	Rev. Paul Clarke	EP	1	1
	Rev. Ivor Macdonald	GA	4	2
	Rev. Colin L. Macleod	SWR	1	1
	1 member appointed by Senate			
	Mr Murdo Murray	WI	3	2
	Mr Michael W. J. Townsend	WI	3	2
	Mr Clive Bailey	GA	1	2
	Mr Charles Anderson	ILR	3	2
	ETS Principal <i>ex officio</i>			
Chairman:	Rev. Paul Clarke			
Clerk:				

Board of Trustees			Year	Term
	Mr Donald Forsyth	ILR	3	1
	Mr James Fraser	ILR	2	4
	Mr Callum Macdonald	ILR	2	2
	Mr Neil Longwe	GA	2	1
	Mr Mark Robinson	N	2	1
	Rev. Kenneth J. Macleod	GA	3	2
	Rev. David C. Meredith	EP	3	2
	Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean	ILR	4	2
	Rev. Paul Clarke	EP	3	2
	Rev. Calum Iain Macleod	ILR	1	2
	Mr Alastair Oliver	EP	1	2
	Mr Donald Macleod (Stornoway)	WI	2	1
Chairman:	Mr Donald Forsyth			
Clerk:	Chief Executive Officer			
Adviser	Principal Clerk <i>ex officio</i>			

Ecumenical Relations Committee			Year	Term
	Mission Director	<i>ex officio</i>		
	Mission Board Chairman	<i>ex officio</i>		
	Principal Clerk of Assembly	<i>ex officio</i>		
	Assistant Clerk Representative	<i>ex officio</i>		
	Principal of ETS			
	Moderator of the Assembly			
	Mr Alastair Simison		2	1
Convener:	Rev. Iver Martin			
Clerk:	Principal Clerk of Assembly			

ETS Board			Year	Term
	Principal <i>ex officio</i>			
	1 other member of Senate			
	Chairman Board of Ministry			
	President SRC			
	Rev. Thomas Davis	EP	4	1
	Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean	ILR	3	2
	Rev. Dr Fergus A. J. Macdonald	EP	3	2
	Mr William Mackenzie	N	1	1
	Mr Ross S. Finlay	LIR	1	1
Chairman:	Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean			
Clerk:	Seminary Secretary			

Mission Board			Year	Term
	Rev. Jeremy Ross	EP	1	1
	Rev. Dr Robert Akroyd	EP	4	1
	Rev. Iain MacAskill	GA	2	2
	Rev. David Macleod	WI	4	1
	Rev. Chris Davidson	ILR	2	1
	Rev. Donald G. Macdonald	SWR	2	1
	Dr Andrew Maciver	EP	2	1
	Dr John Morrison	EP	2	2
Chairman:	Rev. Dr Robert Akroyd			
Secretary	Mission Coordinator			

Psalmody & Praise Committee			<i>Year</i>	<i>Term</i>
	Rev. Iver Martin	EP	3	2
	Rev. Neil L. Macdonald	SWR	2	1
	Mr Cameron Maciver	GA	3	2
	Rev. Ruairidh Maclean	GA	2	2
	Mr Kenneth Macdonald	WI	4	1
	Mr Angus T. Macleod	GA	2	2
Convener:	Rev. Ruairidh Maclean			
Clerk:	Mr Angus T. Macleod			

8. The General Assembly reappoint the **Judicial Commission** as follows:

Presbytery		<i>Year</i>	<i>Term</i>
Edinburgh & Perth	Rev. David C. Meredith	1	3
	Rev. Neil MacMillan	3	1
	Mr John MacRae	1	3
	Mr Neil Campbell	3	1
Glasgow & Argyll	Rev. Iain MacAskill	1	3
	Rev. Ian M. Watson	3	1
	Mr Evan MacDonald	1	3
	Mr Rod Morrison	3	1
Inverness, Lochaber & Ross	Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean	3	1
	Rev. Angus MacRae	1	3
	Mr Andrew Murchison	1	3
	Mr John Macaulay	3	1
Northern	Rev. Howard Stone	3	1
	Rev. Gordon Mair	3	1
	Mr Bill Ferrier	1	1
	Mr John Skinner	3	1
Skye & Wester Ross	Rev. Marcos Florit	3	1
	Rev. Roddie Rankin	1	1
	Mr Ian Macdonald	3	1
	Mr Stewart Clarke	1	1
Western Isles	Rev. Andrew Coghill	1	1
	Rev. Ewen Matheson	2	1
	Mr Donald Macleod (Shawbost)	3	1
	Mr Murdo Murray (Stornoway)	1	3
Chairman:	Mr Neil Campbell		
Clerk:	Principal Clerk		

(B) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

1. The General Assembly note the difficulties likely to be encountered by Deacons' Courts and Finance Committees in holding Annual General Meetings for the purpose of approving annual trustees' reports and congregational accounts.

2. The General Assembly instruct Deacons' Courts and Finance Committees, in the event that it has not been possible to hold the Annual Congregational Meeting, to submit annual reports and accounts to OSCR provided these have first of all been approved by the Deacons' Court/Finance Committee.

(C) ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The General Assembly, recognising the need to make use of audio-visual technology in the carrying out of Church business in exceptional circumstances, enact and ordain as follows:

1. **General Principles**

1.1. The General Assembly declare that exceptional circumstances for the purposes of this Act are circumstances where, due to restrictions on public gatherings imposed by the Government or other legislative authority, Presbyteries are unable to meet physically in one location to constitute a meeting in the normal way.

1.2. Where such exceptional circumstances exist, a Kirk Session may proceed to appoint a congregational meeting to elect a minister to fill a vacancy, and a Presbytery may proceed to hold a meeting to moderate a call, license a student, and conduct an induction or an ordination using audio-visual technology without the need for people to be physically present in one location.

1.3. Such a meeting will be governed by the principles in Act 33, Class 2, 2010 – Use of Modern Technology in Conducting Church Business alongside the additional principles outlined in this Act.

2. **The Signing of the Formula**

The General Assembly declare that, where, during a meeting of Presbytery conducted using audio-visual technology, a person is required to answer the Questions and sign the Formula the following procedure will be used.

2.1. The Clerk will provide the person with a copy of the Formula in PDF in advance of the meeting.

2.2. The Moderator will ask the person the Questions via videoconferencing at the appropriate time during the meeting.

2.3. On giving satisfactory answers to the Questions, the Moderator will then instruct the person to sign the Formula.

2.4. The person will show the unsigned Formula to the Camera.

2.5. The person will sign the Formula on Camera.

2.6. The person will show the signed Formula to the Camera.

2.7. The signed Formula will then be posted to the Presbytery Clerk.

3. **Congregational Meetings to Elect Minister**

The General Assembly declare that, in exceptional circumstances, Kirk Sessions of a vacant congregation may proceed to appoint a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing a minister to fill the vacancy using audio-visual technology.

3.7 The Kirk Session shall meet using audio-visual technology to consider steps to filling a vacancy in the congregation. If they consider the time is right for this, they will appoint a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing a minister.

3.8 The Kirk Session will give due intimation of the congregation meeting to all communicant members and supporting adherents and shall ensure that they are all informed of the meeting and of its purpose.

3.9 The Kirk Session shall explain to members and adherents that the meeting will take place using audio-visual technology. They shall ensure that arrangements are made for members and adherents who do not have access to audio-visual technology to connect with the meeting using landline or mobile telephone. They shall issue a separate document explaining how to join the meeting and how to participate in the meeting for the purposes of the election.

3.10 At the congregational meeting, the Moderator will call for nominations to fill the vacancy in the usual way. Communicant members and supporting adherents will show their support of nominations when asked to do by raising their hand and keeping their hands raised until such time as the Moderator and Clerk have recorded the number of votes.

3.11 On the successful completion of the election process, and on their being a clear majority support for one nomination to fill the vacancy, the Kirk Session shall decide to ask the Presbytery to moderate in a Closed Call.

3.12 The Kirk Session shall report to the Presbytery on the congregational meeting, giving details of the process of informing all communicant members and adherents of the meeting and also giving details of the process of informing the regarding participation in the meeting.

4. **Meetings to Moderate a Call**

The General Assembly declare that, where a Congregation requests Presbytery to Moderate in a Call, and Presbytery agrees that exceptional circumstances exist, the Presbytery shall conduct the meeting to moderate the call via audio-visual technology.

4.1. The Presbytery shall receive a report from the Kirk Session and shall satisfy itself that the steps outlined in Section 3 above have been followed without any detriment to the rights of the people in electing a minister. The Presbytery shall record its satisfaction with this report before proceeding to appoint a meeting to moderate in a Call.

4.2. In order for a meeting to Moderate a Call to be conducted by audio-visual technology, the call must be a Closed Call with the name of the Minister or Probationer agreed and elected by the congregation and inserted in the Call.

4.3. A form of Mandate should be prepared and circulated to each communicant member of the congregation and any adherents who wish to sign the Concurrence in Call.

4.4. The Form of Mandate shall authorise one of the Elders of the congregation to sign the Form of Call or the concurrence in Call on behalf of the member or adherent.

4.5. During the meeting to Moderate the Call there should be a facility for the Presbytery to meet apart from the wider congregation (either a separate conference or placing the congregation on Hold while the Presbytery meeting).

4.6. The Kirk Session will submit to the Presbytery written confirmation that every communicant on the Roll has had the opportunity to complete a mandate form before the Presbytery proceeds to moderate in the Call. The Kirk Session shall also report on the opportunity given to adherents and regular worshippers in the congregation to sign a mandate for concurrence in the Call.

4.7. The meeting to Moderate the Call will be conducted as normal via audio-visual technology.

4.8. At the point where Members and Adherents would normally be invited to sign the Form of Call or the Concurrence in Call, the Elder authorised to sign mandates will sign on behalf of all members and adherents who have granted authority to do so.

4.9. The Presbytery shall consider the Call and, if they decide to sustain the call, the Presbytery Clerk will report to the Congregation and call for any dissents which can either be made via the technology or if some members of the congregation are merely watching a live-stream a telephone number of the Presbytery Clerk can be provided for dissents. If the Presbytery Clerk provides a telephone number for dissents, they must wait 5 minutes before proceeding in case there are any delays in the technology

5. **Licensing**

The General Assembly declare that, where exceptional circumstances exist, a Presbytery may decide to conduct the Licensing of a candidate to preach the Gospel via audio-visual technology.

5.1. The Presbytery may carry out both the trials for licence, and the Presbytery meeting to license the candidate, via technology.

5.2. The Presbytery shall carry out the trials licensing process in line with the recognised practice with meetings conducted according to the general principles outlined in Section 1 above.

5.3. On successful completion of the trials for licence, the Presbytery will proceed to the signing of the Formula in accordance with the procedure outlined in Section 2 of this Act.

6. **Inductions**

The General Assembly declare that, where exceptional circumstances exist, a Presbytery may decide to proceed with the induction of a minister using audio-visual technology.

6.1. The Presbytery shall proceed with the induction service according to the Church's recognised practice with two exceptions.

6.2.3. Firstly, when the Presbytery Clerk reads the Second Edict calling for anyone who is prepared to substantiate objections to the life or doctrine of the Probationer or Minister, he shall provide a telephone number for the raising of any objections and wait 5 minutes before proceeding in case there are any delays in the technology.

6.2.4. Secondly, asking of the Questions and signing of the Formula will be conducted in accordance with the procedure outlined in Section 2 of this Act.

7. **Ordinations**

The General Assembly, notwithstanding the fact that the laying on of hands is an essential element in the Church's current process for ordination to the office of the holy ministry, declare that in exceptional circumstances it shall be competent for Presbyteries to proceed as follows.

7.1. When the Presbytery has sustained a Call to a Probationer according to the process outlined in Section 3 of this Act, the Presbytery may decide to proceed with the ordination process with the use of audio-visual technology.

7.2. The Presbytery shall then follow the procedure outlined in Section 5 of this Act with regard to trials for licence for students for the purpose of completing the trials for ordination.

7.3. The induction service will be carried out as outlined in Section 6 of this Act.

7.4. Having satisfactorily answered the Questions and signed the Formula, the Presbytery shall proceed with the prayer and declaration of ordination after which the person is formally inducted to the congregation and granted a seat in the Presbytery.

7.5. As soon as possible after the exceptional circumstances have ended and the Presbytery is able to meet in the normal way, they shall conduct a service of dedication when the Moderator will lead the Presbytery in prayer and when they will lay hands on the individual before the gathered congregation.

8. **Additional Regulations**

8.4 In exceptional circumstances where people are unable to physically gather for constituted meetings, the Assembly Clerks Office is empowered to make regulations consistent with this Act for the conducting of any Church business via technology in accordance with the principles of the Free Church of Scotland making suitable accommodation to the exceptional circumstances.

8.5 Such regulations must be communicated to each Presbytery Clerk and made widely available to the Church.

8.6 Any regulations made under this Act will be reviewable by the General Assembly or the Commission of the Assembly.

9. **Restrictions**

The General Assembly declare that the provisions of this Act are for exceptional and emergency situations only and not to be adopted for meetings of Church courts in normal circumstances.

REPORT
OF THE
EDINBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Board of ETS thanks the Principal, Course Organisers and other lecturers who faithfully instructed the undergraduate and postgraduate students during the past academic year.

The Board also thanks the lecturers who taught other courses. In addition, the Board thanks Mrs Heather Watson and Mrs Ruth Smith for their oversight of the Seminary offices.

Two members of the Board – Mr Graham Keith (Ayr and Kilwinning Free Church) and Mr Murdo MacPhail (Stornoway) – have completed their terms of service. The Board thanks them for their diligent contribution to its work during the previous eight years.

(B) ETS PRINCIPAL

The Board congratulates Principal Martin on acquiring his MTh. in Scottish Church History and Theology and thank him for the strategic leadership he is giving to the Seminary. The significant student growth in recent years is in no small measure, the result of his vision and energy. His teaching and supervision of undergraduate and postgraduate students is greatly appreciated as is his deep pastoral concern for individual students.

Supported by his colleagues, Principal Martin has coordinated the healthy liaison existing between ETS and Glasgow University, the Quality Assurance Agency, the Borders Agency, and other external bodies.

In addition to his teaching and administrative duties within ETS, Principal Martin also fulfils a key ambassadorial role in promoting the Seminary throughout the Free Church at large, and also amongst the wider evangelical community in the UK, not least the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC). He also actively promotes ETS worldwide, making and maintaining contact with Reformed Churches and important theological institutions in other countries. The growing number of postgraduate students from overseas is testimony to the effectiveness of Mr Martin's advocacy.

All appointments to the teaching posts in ETS are made on a five-year renewable basis. Mr Martin's first five-year term as Principal is due for renewal at this Assembly. The Board are enthusiastically recommending that the Assembly re-appoint him for a second five-year term.

(C) SEMINARY STAFF

The Board is of the opinion that there is an inadvertent mistake in Paragraph 3.1.6.4 of Act 16, Class 2, 2019 regarding Governance of ETS. This Act was passed by the 2019 General Assembly in response to the report of the ETS Quinquennial Review Committee. Paragraph 3.1.6.4 reads as follows: 'To transmit to the General Assembly any proposed retiral or resignation of a member of the full-time academic staff and thereafter, be responsible for submitting to the General Assembly (following consultation with Presbyteries and Synods), a report which will include nominations for appointment.'

This Paragraph reverses the terms of Paragraph 3.1 of Act 26, Class 2, 2014 regarding Staffing Arrangements for ETS. The 2014 Act gave the Board the right to make appointments (after asking Presbyteries for nominations, and, if there are additional costs, asking the Board of Trustees). Paragraph 3.1 reads as follows: 'It will be the responsibility of the Seminary Board to oversee and determine the appointment of lecturing staff at the Seminary'. The change was brought about to prevent a delay in making an appointment. For example, if a Course Organiser decided to leave in June, or was forced by an accident to do so, Paragraph 3.1.6.4 of Act 16, Class 2, 2019 forbids the Board obtaining a successor until the Assembly meets a year later.

The 2017 General Assembly granted the ETS Board the authority to make an appointment to the ETS Mission Centre in terms of Act 26, Class 2, 2014, Paragraph 3.1 and in terms of Act 27, Class 2, 2017, Paragraph 2 as follows: 'The General Assembly authorises the Board of Edinburgh Theological Seminary to proceed with the appointment of a full-time lecturer in Mission

Studies, under Act 26, Class 2, 2014, subject to the financial approval of the Board of Trustees. The Lecturer in Mission Studies will be a member of ETS Senate.'

The Board requests that Paragraph 3.1.6.4 of Act 16, Class 2, 2019 be deleted so that the Act is in line with the decisions of the 2014 General Assembly and that of the 2017 General Assembly regarding the authority granted to the Board in the appointments of Course Organisers and Lecturers.

The Board also noted that Paragraph 6.14 of Act 26, Class 2, 2014 is inconsistent with Paragraph 3.1 of the same Act in that it states, 'The General Assembly will have the final authority over appointments.' The Board therefore, also requests that this sentence be deleted from Paragraph 6.14 of Act 26, Class 2, 2014 and the revised paragraph to read as follows: 'The Seminary Board will include in its report to the General Assembly, all courses together with Course Organisers, Part-time Core Lecturers and Module lecturers.'

(D) CHURCH HISTORY COURSE ORGANISER

With regard to the Church History Course Organiser, the ETS Board decided to delay interviews until the current prohibitions on travel, etc., are removed. The applicants expecting an interview have been informed about the delay and will be contacted once it is possible to hold interviews.

(E) PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Having successfully secured the requisite academic qualification, I undertook to deliver the Church History 2 course during 2019-20. This has taken up a significant amount of time, but it has been hugely rewarding, has brought me into close contact with the student cohort and has meant the fulfilment of my original remit to play a teaching role.

The downside of this has been less time to spend on networking and possible fundraising. A careful balance will have to be struck in the future, but this can only be achieved when a Church History appointment is made.

A family bereavement as well as the current Coronavirus crisis has meant a massive slowdown in my activity from the beginning of this year, in particular the implementation the 2019 Quinquennial Review Committee's proposals. These circumstances are beyond our control and we will undertake to revive our intentions as soon as we are able.

My travel on behalf of ETS during 2019-20 comprised of the ETS stand at the PCA General Assembly, attendance at the Reformation Worship Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, and attendance at the Evangelical Theological Society meeting in San Diego, California.

I wish to thank the staff at ETS for their faithful and continued support in these very difficult times.

IVER MARTIN, *Principal, Edinburgh Theological Seminary*

MALCOLM MACLEAN, *Convener*
FERGUS MACDONALD, *Vice-Convener*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly thank Principal Martin, the Course Organisers and the Lecturers for their instruction of students during the past academic year.
2. The General Assembly thank Dr Alastair Wilson and those who helped him in the Centre for Mission during the past academic year.
3. The General Assembly thank Mrs Heather Watson and Mrs Ruth Smith for fulfilling their various roles in the running of ETS.
4. The General Assembly thank Mr Graham Keith and Mr Murdo MacPhail for their faithful contribution to the work of the ETS Board for the last eight years.

5. The General Assembly thank Principal Martin for his contribution to the growth of ETS. They renew his appointment as Principal according to the terms of Act 32, Class 2, 2015, as amended by Act 16, Class 2, 2019, for a further five years.

6. The General Assembly note that Paragraph 3.1.6.4 of Act 16, Class 2, 2019 regarding Governance of ETS is inconsistent with Paragraph 3.1 of Act 26, Class 2, 2014 regarding Staffing Arrangements for ETS in that it states that 'It will be the responsibility of the Seminary Board to oversee and determine the appointment of lecturing staff at the Seminary'. They instruct that Paragraph 3.1.6.4 of Act 16, Class 2, 2019 be deleted and that the following paragraphs be renumbered accordingly.

7. The General Assembly also note the inconsistency between Paragraph 3.1 of Act 26, Class 2, 2014 regarding Staffing Arrangements for ETS and Paragraph 6.14 of the same Act in that it states that 'The General Assembly will have the final authority over appointments.' They instruct that this sentence be deleted from Paragraph 6.14 and that the revised Paragraph 6.14 should read as follows: 'The Seminary Board will include in its report to the General Assembly, all courses together with Course Organisers, Part-time Core Lecturers and Module lecturers.'

8. The General Assembly commend the ETS Board for its progress in trying to identify a Course Organiser for the Church History Department at Edinburgh Theological Seminary.

REPORT
OF THE
MISSION BOARD

(A) MINISTRY GENERAL

1. **Alternative Ministerial Arrangements.** There are three Alternative Ministerial Arrangements under the oversight of the Board: Golspie, Castletown and Community and East Kilbride.

1.1. **Golspie.** An application was received seeking permission for the Golspie congregation to be removed from the Alternative Ministerial Arrangements and granted to call a minister on a five-year Terminable/Renewable appointment according to the provisions of Act 1, Class 1, 2018, anent The Sustentation Fund, paragraph 3.4. The Board noted the improved financial situation of the congregation of Golspie and approved the application from the Northern Presbytery. This positive step is an encouragement both for the congregation of Golspie and for the Presbytery as well as for the Board. The Board recommends that the Petition's crave be granted. The Petition appears in Appendix One of the Report.

(B) CHURCH PLANTING

1. **Cornerstone.** An application for the appointment of Cornerstone, a church plant from St Columba's Free Church, to become a fully sanctioned charge was received from the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth with all the requisite supporting documents. The Board recommends that the Petition's crave be granted. The Petition appears in Appendix Two of the Report. The Board is delighted with the growth and development of Cornerstone and rejoice with the congregation and the Presbytery over this good news.

REV. DR ROBERT J. AKROYD, *Chairman*
REV. DAVID MACLEOD, *Vice-Chairman*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

(A) GENERAL MINISTRY

1. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Northern Presbytery regarding a five-year terminable/renewable appointment for the congregation of Golspie and, noting the recommendation of the Mission Board, grant its crave. They terminate the current Alternative Ministerial Arrangements under the terms of Act 13, Class 2, 2014. They grant permission to the congregation of Golspie to appoint a Minister on a five-year terminable/renewable appointment in accordance with the terms of Act 1, Class 1, 2018 anent The Sustentation Fund, Paragraph 3.4 subject to the submission of a development plan to the satisfaction of the Mission Board. They appoint Rev. Eric Paterson to the congregation of Golspie in accordance with Act 1, Class 1, 2018, anent the Sustentation Fund and they declare that his appointment be continuous with his original induction to the charge.

(B) CHURCH PLANTING

1. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth regarding the application of Cornerstone Church Plant to become a fully sanctioned charge and, noting the recommendation of the Mission Board, grant its crave. They terminate the Church Plant status of the congregation of Cornerstone and they grant the congregation the status of a fully sanctioned charge under the ongoing ministry of Rev. Neil MacMillan. They declare that his appointment be continuous with his original induction to the charge and without restriction according to the terms of Act 1, Class 1, 2018, paragraph 3.3.

APPENDIX ONE

Petition of the Northern Presbytery

Golspie

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, appointed to meet in Edinburgh on 18th May 2020, the petition of the Northern Presbytery humbly shows that:

1. Whereas the congregation of Golspie was granted an alternative ministerial arrangement under the terms of Act 13, Class 2, 2014 and according to Act 15, Class 2, May 2014;
2. Whereas Rev. Eric Paterson has continued to minister in the congregation after he was duly inducted to the charge on 27th September 1991;
3. Whereas the congregation's ordinary income has seen a marked increase in recent years from £25,541 for 2017 to £42,389 for 2019;
4. Whereas following meetings of the Kirk Session, Deacons' Court and Congregation, a Sustentation Schedule was completed and approved showing the improved income;
5. Whereas it was agreed at the said meeting to request that the congregation be given the status of a terminable/renewable charge in accordance with Act 1, Class 1, 2018;
6. Whereas the congregation is unanimously desirous to continue under the ministry of Rev. Eric Paterson;
7. Whereas Rev. Eric Paterson is willing to continue as the minister at Golspie under the proposed arrangements;
8. Whereas at their meeting on 28th January 2020 the Northern Presbytery approved the said Sustentation Schedule and application to give the congregation the status of a terminable/renewable charge;

Wherefore may it please your Venerable Court to receive the petition and to grant its crave, to the extent that the General Assembly grant the congregation of Golspie permission to have a full-time minister on a five-year terminable/renewable appointment under the terms of Act 1, Class 1, 2018, paragraph 3.4. They appoint Rev. Eric Paterson to the congregation of Golspie in accordance with Act 1, Class 1, 2018, and declare that his appointment be continuous with his original induction to the charge.

Or do otherwise as the Assembly in its wisdom may deem best. And your petitioners will ever pray.

APPENDIX TWO

Petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth

Cornerstone

Unto the Venerable General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on the 18th May 2020, the Petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth humbly shows that:

1. Whereas the congregation of Cornerstone was designated a Church Plant in August 2015 according to Act 15, Class 2, 2013 anent Church Planting and Evangelism;
2. Whereas such designation included the appointment of a minister for a five-year term;
3. Whereas Rev. Neil MacMillan was duly inducted to Cornerstone on 25th October 2015;
4. Whereas the congregation of Cornerstone greatly benefits from the ministry of Rev. Neil MacMillan;

5. Whereas the work and witness of the congregation of Cornerstone has developed into being an established part of the community;
6. Whereas Presbytery satisfied itself on the wishes of the congregation and their answers in the Sustentation schedule in meeting with representatives of the congregation
7. Whereas it is the considered opinion of the Presbytery and of the congregation of Cornerstone that it is now appropriate to consider the arrangements for the future of the congregation;
8. Whereas the congregation's ordinary income for 2017 was £33,852, for 2018 was £50,593 and for 2019 was £59,031;
9. Whereas the congregation is committed to remitting the cost of ministry and the appropriate levels of Missions Levy and Administration Levy and is in a position to do so;
10. Whereas it is the sincere desire of the congregation that their current minister, Rev. Neil MacMillan should remain in the charge;
11. Whereas Presbytery satisfied itself that Rev. Neil MacMillan wished to continue as minister in the congregation in the event of it becoming a fully sanctioned charge.

Wherefore may it please your Venerable Court to receive the petition and grant its crave, to the extent that the General Assembly terminate the Church Plant status of the congregation of Cornerstone and place the congregation on the Equal Dividend Platform as a fully sanctioned charge under the ongoing ministry of Rev. Neil MacMillan and to declare that his employment be continuous with his original induction to the charge And to further declare that the minister's appointment be without restriction according to the terms of Act 1, Class 1, 2018, paragraph 3.3.

Or do otherwise as in their wisdom they may see fit. And your petitioners will ever pray.

REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF MINISTRY

The Board of Ministry present this brief report to the General Assembly appointed to meet in May 2020. The Board look forward to reporting more fully to a full meeting of the General Assembly or the Commission of Assembly, should these be able to meet later in the year. The Board give thanks to God for all the Candidates under their care and continues to pray earnestly to the Lord of the Harvest asking that God send out many more gospel workers to meet the urgent spiritual needs of our times. In the past year, the Board has called on the church to pray for sixty more gospel workers to enter service in the next decade. The Board renew this call to prayer and to active training and recruitment of gospel workers.

(A) APPRECIATION AND THANKS

1. ***Appreciation and Sympathy.*** The Board was deeply shocked and saddened by the sudden death in February 2020 of our dedicated Clerk, the Rev. Dr David Ford. David was a wise, gifted and humble servant of Jesus Christ and it was an honour for us to serve alongside such a delightful man. He blessed the Church and Academic Theology through his unstinting service rendered in Scotland, Peru and Colombia. We express our sympathy to Marianna Ford and all in David's loving family in their sorrow. The Board place on record its deep appreciation for his many gifts and commend his loved ones to the care and comfort of the Lord.
2. ***Consultants and Advisors.*** The Board thanks our consultants and advisors who assist with interviews, pastoral care and counselling, candidate assessment days, development of CPD for ministers and who assist in integrating our work with that of the Mission Board and the Seminary. In the past year Rev. Paul Clarke and Rev. Thomas Davis have been very helpful in developing a framework and policy for future training. We thank our partners in ETS, the academic and support staff and members of the Seminary Board. We thank ministers and congregations who provide students with placements and who serve as training congregations. We thank Rev. Alex MacDonald and his team for their Pastoral Care work supporting ministry families.
3. ***In-service Training Conference.*** The Board also thanks Rev. David Court and Mr Donald MacLeod for arranging the annual In-Service Training Conference and thank Mr Donald MacDonald and MacDonald Hotels for their hospitality and generosity to the church.
4. ***Retiring Members.*** The Board express its gratitude to Rev. Angus MacRae and Rev. Gordon Matheson, who each complete an eight-year period of service with the Board at this General Assembly. They are thanked for all their contributions, and in particular, for their compassion and pastoral concern for candidates, ministers and their families.

(B) ONGOING ACTIVITY AND FUTURE INTENTIONS

1. ***Candidates for the Ministry.*** Since last General Assembly the Board recognised Mr Geoff Murray, Mr James Blackwell, Mr David Trimble, Mr James Murray and Mr Philip Pickett as candidates for the ministry. Several other applications are under consideration.
2. ***Applications for the Free Church Ministry.*** As instructed by last General Assembly, the Board assisted the Mission Board in facilitating the return of Rev. Gavino Fioretti to active ministry in Scotland. The Board processed an application to the ministry from Rev. David Carmichael, formerly of the Church of Scotland in Lesmahagow (admitted March 2020). The Board also interviewed Rev. Euan G. Dodds, formerly of Holyrood Evangelical Church, Edinburgh. The Board recommends that he be admitted as a Free Church minister and a separate report on his application will be presented to this meeting of the General Assembly in private session.
3. ***Other Activities.*** The Board will report to a future General Assembly on other activities and our future intentions. These include the report of our *Pastoral Care Worker*; development of the ETS Curriculum especially in Preaching and Practical Theology; recruitment of an adequate supply of candidates and possibly convening a vocations conference; approving a Training Vision and Framework policy for equipping and training for all forms of ministry; standardising terminology for

different levels of training and setting agreed standards for different levels of training and equipping (for example replacing the term ‘apprentice’ with ‘foundation training’) and establishing agreed standards and pathways for the ‘core training’ of future ministers through ETS and recognised training churches; developing a sustainable funding model that includes both practical and academic training; further developing a training culture and useful CPD for ministers; improving links with Presbyteries; reviewing Assembly Legislation and the terms of reference of the Board.

4. Board Membership. As the Board intends to make greater use of training congregations for the practical aspect of ministry preparation it will be helpful to increase the membership of the Board to include a minister from a recognised training congregation. The Board therefore recommend that their membership be increased by one minister, to be nominated by the Board itself, from among those serving as trainers. In this connection the Board recommend that Rev. Derek Lamont be appointed as the member nominated by the Board of Ministry from this General Assembly.

ANGUS MACRAE, *Chairman*
IVOR MACDONALD, *Vice-Chairman*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Board of Ministry and thank the Board, especially the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and those completing their period of service with the Board.
2. The General Assembly note with sadness the sudden passing of Rev. Dr David E.C. Ford, formerly Clerk to the Board of Ministry, and give thanks for his varied, diligent and faithful contributions to the Kingdom of God. They commend his family to the grace and care of Almighty God.
3. The General Assembly thank Rev. Alex J. MacDonald, the *Pastoral Support Worker*, and all the consultants and advisors who assist the Board of Ministry and all who facilitate In-Service Training.
4. The General Assembly call on the whole Church to continue to pray that God would raise up many more gospel workers for the urgent spiritual needs of our times.
5. The General Assembly note the matters under ongoing review by the Board of Ministry and invite the Board to report to future meetings of the General Assembly or the Commission of Assembly on their activities and future intentions.
6. The General Assembly note the comments of the Board of Ministry on the Board’s membership. They amend Paragraph 1.2.3 of Act 6, Class 2, 2014, as amended by Act, 12, Class 2, 2015, Act 17, Class 2, 2016, Act 12, Class 2, 2019, and Act 15, Class 2, 2019, to read as follows:

‘Ten members in total including the Principal of Edinburgh Theological Seminary *ex officio*, one additional member of the College Senate appointed annually by them on an *ex officio* basis, and one additional member who shall be a minister in a Training Congregation nominated by the Board of Ministry. The remaining membership shall comprise three ministers and four elders appointed by the General Assembly for a four-year term renewable for one further term of four years. The Chairman shall be appointed from the membership of the Board by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The quorum shall be three members of the Board. The Board shall be empowered to appoint Consultants and Advisors as required, particularly to liaise closely with the Mission Board and to assist with interviews and other functions of the Board.’
7. The General Assembly appoint Rev. Derek Lamont to the membership of the Board as the representative of training congregations for a four-year term renewable for one further term of four years according to the terms of appointment in Act 6, Class 2, 2014, Paragraph 1.2.3.

REPORT
OF THE
ASSEMBLY CLERKS' OFFICE

The Assembly Clerks' Office presents its report to the May 2020 General Assembly appointed to meet for a second Session on Tuesday 6th October 2020 as follows:

(A) GENERAL

- 1. Nominations.** Rev. Paul Clarke and Mr James Fraser submitted their resignations from the membership of the Board of Trustees in June and September, respectively. The Clerks' Office has been notified of the resignations and will continue to consult with the Board, according to the terms of Act 6, Class 2, 2014, in order to appoint replacements who will serve until the 2021 General Assembly.
- 2. Examination of Records.** Due to the COVID-19 restrictions on travelling and gatherings, the General Assembly of May 2020 remitted the examination of the records of Boards and Committees to the Assembly Clerks to be included with the examination of Presbytery records. The Assembly Clerks have been unable to carry out this duty due to the ongoing restrictions. The Clerks recommend that the 2020 examination of records be cancelled and that the normal arrangements be restored in preparation of the 2021 General Assembly.
- 3. Presbytery Workers.** The 2019 General Assembly instructed the Assembly Clerks' Office to draw up draft proposals for a new Act of Assembly to replace Act 10, Class 2, 2006 regarding the Appointment and Employment of Presbytery Workers with such draft proposals to update, revise and clarify the provisions of Act 10, Class 2, 2006, and to carry out this exercise in conjunction with the Mission Board and the Board of Trustees. Final consultation and discussions with the Mission Board and the Board of Trustees have not been possible due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings and meetings. The Clerks recommend that this remit be continued until the 2021 General Assembly.
- 4. Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll – General Assessors.** There was submitted a petition from the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll requesting the appointment of two General Assessors for the Presbytery. The Petition is found in Appendix One. The Clerks recommend that the Presbytery's request be granted as set out in the Deliverance Paragraph (A) 3.
- 5. Documents.** The General Assembly on 18th May 2020 approved the Standing Orders with Act 33, Class 2, 2010 regarding the Use of Modern Technology in Conducting Church Business appended for the purposes of the revised arrangements for the meeting of Assembly due on 18th May 2020. The following items in Standing Orders were subsequently suspended: B.1 – Elders' Certificates; C.3 – Examination of Presbytery Records; E.4 – Submission of Amendments and Addenda apart from Paragraph 1; E.14 – Examination of Presbytery Records; E.15 – Examination of Records of Boards and Committees; E.16 – Additional Assembly Committees. The approved documents remain in force and apply to the 6th October 2020 meeting of the Assembly.
- 6. Questions and Formula.** The General Assembly on 18th May 2020 agreed that the process of answering the Questions and Signing the Formula on the part successful applicants for the Free Church ministry should be completed during the meeting of the Assembly due to the current COVID-19 restrictions of gatherings according to the terms of Act 4, Class 2, May 2020, Paragraph 2. The Clerks recommend that the same procedure be followed by the 6th October 2020 Session of the Assembly.

(B) PROVINCIAL SYNODS

- 1. Overture to Presbyteries.** The 2018 General Assembly instructed the Assembly Clerks' Office to review of the role of Provincial Synods within the Church and to report on the matter to the 2019 General Assembly. The 2019 General Assembly passed an Overture, in the form of a draft Act recommending that Provincial Synods be dissolved, to Presbyteries according to the terms of the Barrier Act.
- 2. Presbytery Responses.** The Principal Clerk has received Responses from all the home Presbyteries as follows: (a) Edinburgh and Perth – approval; (b) Glasgow and Argyll – approval; (c) Inverness, Lochaber and Ross – approval; (d) Northern

– approval; (e) Skye and Wester Ross – approval; (f) Western Isles – disapproval. In summary, this means that five out of the six home Presbyteries have approved the changes and one Presbytery has responded with disapproval of the changes.

3. ***Dissolution of Synods.*** The Assembly Clerks recommend that Provincial Synods be dissolved according to the terms and arrangements set out in the draft Act found in Appendix Two and in the Deliverance Section (B).

MALCOLM MACLEOD, *Principal Clerk*

APPENDIX ONE

Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll

General Assessors

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland appointed to meet at Edinburgh on Tuesday 6th October 2020, the Petition of the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll humbly shows that:

Whereas the number of active ministers in the Presbytery has become depleted so that the Presbytery now has difficulty in finding men to act as Interim Moderators in vacant congregations;

1. Whereas the number of vacant charges is likely to increase in the near future, thus increasing the problem;
2. Whereas the Presbytery Strategy Committee requires to be strengthened in order to deal more adequately with the increasing number of congregations coming under its remit;

Wherefore it is humbly requested that the General Assembly appoint Rev. David C. Meredith, Mission Director, and Rev. Nigel Anderson, minister at Livingston, to be General Assessors to the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll.

Or do otherwise as in their wisdom may seem best.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

APPENDIX TWO

Dissolution of Synods

The General Assembly, noting that annual statutory meetings of Provincial Synods have been suspended since 2009 General Assembly, and that the reduced number of Presbyteries in the Church has resulted in this tier of Church government becoming largely redundant, and desiring therefore that Provincial Synods be dissolved and removed from the governmental structure of the Church, ordain as follows with the consent of Presbyteries:

1. ***Dissolution of Provincial Synods.*** The General Assembly, noting that statutory meetings of Provincial Synods have been suspended since the 2009 General Assembly, and that Provincial Synods no longer have a meaningful purpose in the government of the Church due to reduction in the number of Presbyteries over the years, declare that Synods be dissolved with no prejudice to the review procedures regarding Complaints and Appeals, Petitions, and References.
2. ***Review Procedures.*** The General Assembly declare that the business of reviewing matters from Presbyteries now be directed to the Commissions of Assembly and finally to the General Assembly. They instruct that all future meetings of the Commissions of Assembly be empowered to receive appeals, complaints, petitions and references from individuals and from the lower courts of the Church.
 - 2.1 The General Assembly declare that the procedure for the submission of papers, etc., regarding references, appeals, complaints, and petitions be such that these be forwarded to the Principal Clerk of Assembly for inclusion in the business of the Assembly or its Commissions. They instruct the Principal Clerk to bring all such papers to attention of the Assembly Business Committee who will bring a recommendation to the Assembly or to its Commissions on the acceptability and relevance of all papers.

2.2 The General Assembly declare that the final decision regarding the reception of papers, etc., associated with references, appeals, complaints, and petitions will rest with the Assembly and its Commissions and that it shall be competent to submit amendments to the Committee's proposal at the time at which its report is taken up for consideration.

2.3 The General Assembly affirm that in general terms the findings of the Commissions of Assembly are final and not subject to appeal. However, they declare that, in the case of Complaints and Appeals, Petitions, and References, it shall be competent for parties in the review process to appeal to the General Assembly.

3. **Examination of Records.** The General Assembly instruct that Presbytery records be submitted for examination to the General Assembly Business Committee annually by 31st March. They instruct the Business Committee to examine the records at its annual April meeting and to report on the examination to the next General Assembly.

4. **Financial Arrangements.** The General Assembly instruct all Synods to meet in order to make suitable arrangements for the allocation of funds held in the name of the Synod.

4.1 **General Funds.** The General Assembly direct that, where monies are held in a general account in the name of the Synod, such funds be divided equally between the Presbyteries of the Synod.

4.2 **Bursary Funds.** The General Assembly further direct that, where funds are held by the Synod in restricted funds such as bursary accounts and grant-aid accounts, Synods make suitable arrangements for the administration of such fund by the Central Offices of the Church. They instruct the Central Offices to arrange the dispersal of such funds according to the terms of the deeds of the funds. They also instruct the Central Offices to ensure that bursaries or grant aid are advertised to students in Edinburgh Theological Seminary and any others who are engaged in post-graduate studies who may qualify for financial support from the terms of the bursaries or grants.

4.3 **Reporting.** The General Assembly instruct each Synod to report to the Assembly Clerks' Office on the completion of the financial re-arrangements set out in Paragraph 4.1 and 4.2 and to do so not later than 31st December 2020. They instruct the Assembly Clerk to report accordingly to the next General Assembly.

5. **Dissolution.** The General Assembly declare that Provincial Synods be dissolved and that the provisions of this Act are implemented as soon as possible after the rising of the 2021 General Assembly.

6. **Repeal.** The General Assembly repeals all Acts of the General Assembly relevant to the constitution of Synods, the re-organisation of Synods and to general meetings of Synod.

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

(A) GENERAL

1. The General Assembly declare that the 2020 examination of the records of Presbyteries, Boards and Committees be cancelled. They instruct that arrangements be made for the examination of all records for years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 in time to report to the 2021 General Assembly.

2. The General Assembly continue the remit of the 2019 General Assembly and instruct the Assembly Clerks' Office to draw up draft proposals for a new Act of Assembly to replace Act 10, Class 2, 2006 regarding the Appointment and Employment of Presbytery Workers with such draft proposals to update, revise and clarify the provisions of Act 10, Class 2, 2006. They direct that the draft proposals be drawn up in conjunction with the Mission Board and the Board of Trustees and instruct the Assembly Clerks to report to the 2021 General Assembly on a proposed revision of the arrangements.

3. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll and grant its crave. They appoint Rev. David C. Meredith, Mission Director, and Rev. Nigel Anderson, minister at Livingston, to be General Assessors to the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll, with the appointments to be reviewed at the May 2023 General Assembly.

4. The General Assembly declare that Standing Orders as approved by the Assembly on 18th May 2020 be the Standing Orders for the 6th October 2020 Session of the Assembly.

5. The General Assembly declare that successful applicants for the Free Church ministry may answer the Questions and sign the Formula at the meeting of the Assembly subsequent to their application being accepted according to the process set out in Act 4, Class 2, May 2020, Paragraph 2.

(B) PROVINCIAL SYNODS

1. The General Assembly note the responses from Presbyteries to the Overture sent down according to the terms of the Barrier Act regarding the dissolution of Provincial Synods. They enact and ordain as follows:

The General Assembly, noting that annual statutory meetings of Provincial Synods have been suspended since 2009 General Assembly, and that the reduced number of Presbyteries in the Church has resulted in this tier of Church government becoming largely redundant, and desiring therefore that Provincial Synods be dissolved and removed from the governmental structure of the Church, ordain as follows with the consent of Presbyteries:

1. ***Dissolution of Provincial Synods.*** The General Assembly, noting that statutory meetings of Provincial Synods have been suspended since the 2009 General Assembly, and that Provincial Synods no longer have a meaningful purpose in the government of the Church due to reduction in the number of Presbyteries over the years, declare that Synods be dissolved with no prejudice to the review procedures regarding Complaints and Appeals, Petitions, and References.

2. ***Review Procedures.*** The General Assembly declare that the business of reviewing matters from Presbyteries now be directed to the Commissions of Assembly and finally to the General Assembly. They instruct that all future meetings of the Commissions of Assembly be empowered to receive appeals, complaints, petitions and references from individuals and from the lower courts of the Church.

2.1 The General Assembly declare that the procedure for the submission of papers, etc., regarding references, appeals, complaints, and petitions be such that these be forwarded to the Principal Clerk of Assembly for inclusion in the business of the Assembly or its Commissions. They instruct the Principal Clerk to bring all such papers to the attention of the Assembly Business Committee who will bring a recommendation to the Assembly or to its Commissions on the acceptability and relevance of all papers.

2.2 The General Assembly declare that the final decision regarding the reception of papers, etc., associated with references, appeals, complaints, and petitions will rest with the Assembly and its Commissions and that it shall be competent to submit amendments to the Committee's proposal at the time at which its report is taken up for consideration.

2.3 The General Assembly affirm that in general terms the findings of the Commissions of Assembly are final and not subject to appeal. However, they declare that, in the case of Complaints and Appeals, Petitions, and References, it shall be competent for parties in the review process to appeal to the General Assembly.

3. ***Examination of Records.*** The General Assembly instruct that Presbytery records be submitted for examination to the General Assembly Business Committee annually by 31st March. They instruct the Business Committee to examine the records at its annual April meeting and to report on the examination to the next General Assembly.

4. ***Financial Arrangements.*** The General Assembly instruct all Synods to meet in order to make suitable arrangements for the allocation of funds held in the name of the Synod.

4.1 ***General Funds.*** The General Assembly direct that, where monies are held in a general account in the name of the Synod, such funds be divided equally between the Presbyteries of the Synod.

4.2 ***Bursary Funds.*** The General Assembly further direct that, where funds are held by the Synod in restricted funds such as bursary accounts and grant-aid accounts, Synods make suitable arrangements for the administration of such fund by the Central Offices of the Church. They instruct the Central Offices to arrange the dispersal of such funds according to the terms of the deeds of the funds. They also instruct the Central Offices to ensure that bursaries or grant aid are advertised to students in Edinburgh Theological Seminary and any others who are engaged in post-graduate studies who may qualify for financial support from the terms of the bursaries or grants.

4.3 **Reporting.** The General Assembly instruct each Synod to report to the Assembly Clerks' Office on the completion of the financial re-arrangements set out in Paragraph 4.1 and 4.2 and to do so not later than 31st December 2020. They instruct the Assembly Clerk to report accordingly to the next General Assembly.

5. **Dissolution.** The General Assembly declare that Provincial Synods be dissolved and that the provisions of this Act are implemented as soon as possible after the rising of the 2021 General Assembly.

6. **Repeal.** The General Assembly repeals all Acts of the General Assembly relevant to the constitution of Synods, the re-organisation of Synods and to general meetings of Synod.

REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF MINISTRY

The Board of Ministry presents this brief report to the General Assembly appointed to meet in October 2020. The Board looks forward to reporting more fully on exciting developments in its work to a full meeting of the General Assembly when this again becomes possible. For the past 18 months, the Board has been calling on the Church to pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out a new generation of workers into His harvest. The fields are white for harvest, but the labourers are few. The Board gives thanks to the Lord for those who have heeded this call to prayer, but especially for His grace in beginning to answer the prayers of His people. The Board renews its call to prayer and commits itself to the ongoing active recruitment, training and care of gospel workers. At the same time, the Board gives thanks for all our existing Ministers of the gospel, and for their tireless labours to continue to fulfil the Great Commission of our Lord in these challenging days. We call upon the Church to pray for our Ministers, that they might not grow weary in doing good, that they might watch their life and doctrine closely, and that Christ might work through them for the good of His people and the glory of His own name.

(A) APPRECIATION AND THANKS

1. **Consultants & Advisors.** The Board thanks our consultants and advisers who assist with interviews, pastoral care and counselling, candidate assessment days, development of CPD for ministers and who assist in integrating our work with that of the Mission Board and the Seminary. In the recent past, Rev. Thomas Davis and Rev. Hamish Sneddon have been very helpful in developing a framework and policy for future training. We thank our partners in ETS, the academic and support staff and members of the Seminary Board. We thank ministers and congregations who provide students with placements and who serve as training congregations. We thank Rev. Alex MacDonald and his team for their Pastoral Care work supporting ministry families. We also thank Rev. David Court and Mr Donald Macleod for arranging the annual In-Service Training Conference and thank Mr Donald MacDonald and MacDonald Hotels for their hospitality and generosity to the church.
2. **New Members.** The Board was delighted to welcome Rev. Derek Lamont and Rev. Colin Macleod to their number and thank them for the enthusiasm with which they have begun their work. The Board is grateful that Mr Clive Bailey was elected by the General Assembly in May to serve a second four-year term and thank him for his ongoing work. The Board also gives thanks that Mr Charles Anderson has agreed to serve as its Clerk.

(B) ONGOING ACTIVITY AND FUTURE INTENTIONS

1. **Candidates for the Ministry.** Since May, the Board has recognised Mr John MacPherson, Mr David Ferguson, Mr Neil Longwe, Mr Israel Guerrero and Mr Angus Macleod as candidates for the ministry. Several other applications are under consideration, and more are expected.
2. **Applications for the Free Church Ministry.** The Board interviewed and processed applications to the Free Church ministry from Rev. Benjamin Fiddian, currently a Staff Lecturer at Faith Mission Bible College, and from Rev. Douglas Cranston, formerly of the Church of Scotland in Kilmacollm. The Board recommends that they both be admitted as Free Church ministers. A separate report on their respective applications will be presented to this meeting of the General Assembly in private session.
3. **Other Activities.** The Board will report to a future General Assembly on other activities and its future intentions. These include the report of our *Pastoral Care Worker*; the interface between the ETS Curriculum and Church-based training, especially in the areas of Preaching and Practical Theology; recruitment of an adequate supply of candidates and possibly convening a vocations conference; approving a Training Vision and Framework policy for equipping and training for all forms of ministry; standardising terminology for different levels of training and setting agreed standards for different levels of training and equipping (for example replacing the term ‘apprentice’ with ‘foundation training’) and establishing agreed standards and pathways for the ‘core training’ of future ministers through ETS and recognised training churches; developing a sustainable funding model that includes both practical and academic training; further developing a training culture and useful CPD for ministers; improving links with Presbyteries; reviewing Assembly Legislation and the terms of reference of the Board.

4. **Board Structure.** The scope of the work entrusted to the Board is incredibly broad. The Board has therefore established two new teams to facilitate and advance its work: a 'Students Team' and 'Ministers Team'. The Board will report to the next General Assembly on the activity of each of its teams.

PAUL CLARKE, *Chairman*
IVOR MACDONALD, *Vice-Chairman*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Board of Ministry and thank the Board, especially the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for their work.
2. The General Assembly thank Rev. Alex J. MacDonald the *Pastoral Support Worker* and all the consultants and advisers who assist the Board of Ministry and all who facilitate the In-Service Training.
3. The General Assembly call on the whole Church to continue to pray that God would raise up many more gospel workers for the urgent spiritual needs of our times.
4. The General Assembly note the ongoing activities of the Board of Ministry, including the creation of a 'Student Team' and a 'Ministers Team' to further its work, and invite the Board to report to future meetings of the General Assembly or the Commission of Assembly on its activities and future intentions.
5. The General Assembly agree to meet in private session to take up and dispose of Supplementary Reports from the Board of Ministry concerning Applications for Admission to Free Church ministry from the Rev. Benjamin Fiddian, and Rev. Douglas Cranston, including the signing of the Formula should the applications be successful.

REPORT
OF THE
EDINBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Earlier this year the Board gave a brief report to the meeting of the General Assembly. In this report, the Board includes (1) a brief update on how the Seminary has arranged for classes in the current semester, (2) information about the work in the previous academic year of the ETS Centre for Mission, and (3) a proposal for a Programme Leader of the Church History department.

(A) GENERAL

1. ***Seminary Classes.*** The sudden arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 meant urgent rearrangements such that all classes from 14th March were conducted online. Being already equipped with distance learning facilities, the transition was easier than expected although it did amount to a radical change in learning experience for the students.
2. ***Use of Sub-groups.*** The first meeting of the newly enhanced Senate, as approved by the 2019 General Assembly, took place on the 4th June by Zoom. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the Quinquennial Committee. The Senate agreed to remit more operational matters to sub-groups to report to subsequent meetings of Senate.
3. ***First Semester 2020-21 – Classes.*** At the first meeting of the enhanced Senate, it was unanimously decided that, because of the uncertainty as to what the trajectory of the Covid infection would be, all classes during the first semester of 2020-21 would also be online. It was also agreed that this change in circumstance also facilitated the adjustment to a more flexible pedagogical models approved by the General Assembly in 2019. Contact hours were also adjusted to minimise screen time. As yet, no decision has been taken about classes within the second semester.
4. ***Scottish Theology by Donald Macleod.*** The Board congratulates Principal Emeritus Donald Macleod for his recently published volume called *Therefore The Truth I Speak*. It is a substantial work on Scottish Church History covering the Reformation and Covenanting periods and explains the various theological emphases of those times.

(B) CENTRE FOR MISSION

The ETS Centre for Mission is a core part of Edinburgh Theological Seminary and exists to encourage and support the Church, in the UK and throughout the world, to engage in mission rooted in careful theological reflection and responsible and effective practice. At the 2019 General Assembly, the following remit was approved for the ETS Centre for Mission:

- To promote serious engagement with mission studies, and reflective participation in mission practice, among ETS staff and students by means of formal academic courses and other mission-focused events;
- To engage in, and foster, constructive interaction with students, mission agencies, and serving missionaries (local and global) so as to ensure effective training for those preparing for, or engaged in, various forms of mission service;
- To encourage serving missionaries (local and global) by providing opportunities for theological development and biblical research in topics of relevant interest;
- To provide education in mission studies to the wider church;
- To respond to specific requests for theological and practical training of leaders and key workers by the wider church, mission agencies, and, in particular, by the Mission Board and the Board of Ministry of the Free Church of Scotland.

This approved remit is helpful both to those who work in the context of the ETS Centre for Mission and to the wider church as it provides clarity and direction for the activities of the Centre for Mission. Throughout the past year, the Centre for Mission has continued to work in line with this remit.

1. **World Mission Days.** In the session 2019-20, three World Mission Days took place. Each World Mission Day combines preaching, teaching and prayer, focussing on a different topic so that there is a cumulative educational experience. This year, topics covered included Mission and Bible Translation, Mission to the Jewish People, and Mission in Rural Communities. We aim to expose the students to speakers who have particular expertise in the relevant areas. This year, for example, we welcomed guest speakers from Wycliffe Bible Translators and Christian Witness to Israel, as well as from the Free Church. We have encouraged people connected with mission agencies or with mission experience to attend these days and that has led to useful contacts for ETS students.
2. **MTh in Missiology.** The Seminary has had another encouraging intake of students on the MTh in Missiology, including three full-time international students and some part-time UK-based students. Applications for next year suggest that the programme is considered to be valuable by a range of people with various levels of mission experience.
3. **Postgraduate Seminars.** While only a portion of the postgraduate students at ETS are on the MTh in Missiology programme, the Centre for Mission has also hosted a series of postgraduate seminars for all our postgraduate students. These have been good opportunities for ETS students to develop skills in thoughtful and respectful critical engagement with academic presentations. Well-qualified speakers have tackled a variety of topics in several different disciplines. The seminars have provided a context for all postgraduate students to develop a sense of community. We will deeply miss the presence of Dr David Ford at future seminars. David regularly attended seminars and engaged helpfully in the discussion.
4. **Training for Ministry Apprentices and Ministers in Training.** The Board hopes that, in collaboration with the Board of Ministry, the ETS Centre for Mission will play a central role as a resource for future bilateral ministerial training programmes.
5. **Sabbatical Studies.** Over the past two years, the Seminary has had five ministers/elders (a good number of the ministers were from the Presbyterian Church of Ireland) taking time to do Sabbatical Studies at ETS. Their areas of research included 'Mission in the 21st Century', 'Discipleship', and 'Evangelism'. We look forward to providing rest, refreshment, and research opportunities to others serving in mission and ministry.

All who are involved in the ETS Centre for Mission are encouraged by opportunities to highlight the central place of mission in the life of ETS and, in cooperation with Generation, in the Free Church as a whole. We continue to appreciate the support, encouragement and involvement of the Free Church with respect to our various activities.

(C) CHURCH HISTORY APPOINTMENT

Since the retirement of Dr John McIntosh, the Board has been active in its attempt to replace him by recruiting a Course Organiser / Lecturer in Church History. Having secured the approval of the General Assembly in 2018, the Board received instructions from the Board of Trustees that in order to justify the required additional subvention, it was necessary to appoint a candidate with both a PhD and a proven academic record. The Seminary Board agreed that these stipulations made sense in order to maintain the academic profile of ETS and to attract postgraduate students.

1. **Interim Arrangements.** During the interim period, the Church History department has been divided in two. Rev. Nigel Anderson was appointed as temporary Course Organiser, with oversight of the BTh Church History course, and responsibility to provide classes in the Reformation. Dr John Ferguson was appointed as the temporary MTh Programme Leader, responsible for the supervision of postgraduate students who were undertaking the MTh in Scottish Church History and Theology.
2. **A Programme Leader.** Having reviewed both of the positions above, the Board concluded that, depending on circumstances, it would be advantageous to have the flexibility to appoint a full-time Programme Leader / Lecturer in Church History instead of a full time Course Organiser. The Programme Leader, working alongside the Course Organiser (who would be appointed by the Board either from within existing staff or as a part-time arrangement) would have primary responsibility for the more academic side of things, including research and publications as well as the supervision of MTh students. This would prevent the scenario where a Course Organiser, whose primary responsibility was the organisation of the BTh

programme, might become overloaded with these responsibilities, leaving no time to devote to publication and postgraduate supervision.

2.1 **Job Description.** The Board, therefore, proposes the establishment of the post of Programme Leader in Church History who must subscribe to the confessional position of the Free Church of Scotland and whose job description is as follows:

- To organise and carry out work in research, post graduate supervision and teaching.
- To effectively assess resource requirements.
- To motivate, inspire and support people.
- To work well in a team.
- To devise and/or manage multiple teaching, learning and assessment activities.
- To contribute to the pastoral care of students and assist in the overall management of the Seminary as a member of the leadership team.

2.2 **Terms of Appointment.** The Board recognises the terms of Act 26, Class 2, 2014 regarding ETS Staff that all Core Lecturers must subscribe to the whole doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and must be office bearers in a church which, to the satisfaction of the Seminary Board, exercises biblical discipline in matters of heresy or immorality.

The person appointed to the post of Programme Leader would be required to subscribe to the confessional position of the Free Church of Scotland, but the Board recommends that, in this more academic instance alone, the candidate would not necessarily be required to hold an ordained office.

Furthermore, the Board is of the view that, in this more academic instance alone, the Board should have the freedom to appoint a female Programme Leader should the preferred and better qualified candidate be a woman.

ALISTAIR WILSON, *Coordinator, ETS Centre of Mission*

MALCOLM MACLEAN, *Convener*
FERGUS MACDONALD, *Vice-Convener*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

(A) GENERAL

1. The General Assembly thank the Board for its work on behalf of Edinburgh Theological Seminary.
2. The General Assembly thank Principal Martin for his leadership of Edinburgh Theological Seminary.
3. The General Assembly thank the Professors and Lecturers who have given instruction in the various departments of Edinburgh Theological Seminary during the current period of crisis connected to COVID 19.
4. The General Assembly also thank Mrs Heather Watson and the administrative staff for their contribution to the work of the Seminary.
5. The General Assembly congratulate Principal Emeritus Donald Macleod for his recently published volume on Scottish Church History.

(B) ETS CENTRE OF MISSION

1. The General Assembly thank Dr Alistair Wilson for his work as Coordinator of the Centre for Mission.
2. The General Assembly also thanks the other lecturers and speakers who contributed to the various activities of the Centre for Mission.

(C) CHURCH HISTORY PROGRAMME LEADER / LECTURER

1. The General Assembly approve the appointment of an MTh Programme Leader / Lecturer in the department of Church History at ETS instead of the appointment of a Church History Course Organiser.
2. The General Assembly declare that the Programme Leader / Lecturer may be male or female and that the person will be appointed based on suitability and qualifications for the post. They declare that the appointee should hold a relevant doctorate and, if possible, some track record of relevant publications.
3. The General Assembly declare that the Programme Leader / Lecturer's responsibilities shall include providing supervision in MTh (Taught) in Scottish Church History and Theology, engaging in research and publications, particularly in the field of Scottish Church History, assisting in the delivery of lectures, seminars and tutorials in the Church History Department, assisting in the general administration responsibilities at ETS, and providing pastoral and academic support to BTh and MTh students.
4. The General Assembly declare that the Programme Leader / Lecturer will work alongside the Director of Post Graduate studies in supervising post graduate students and will work within existing BTh structures in delivering an agreed programme of lectures under the management of the Principal.
5. The General Assembly declare that the Programme Leader / Lecturer in Church History must be a communicant member under the pastoral discipline of a Reformed Church, shall give unqualified subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith, and shall be in full sympathy with the doctrinal position of the Free Church.
6. The General Assembly declare that the Programme Leader / Lecturer will be a full-time member of staff at ETS and have a seat on the Senate.
7. The General Assembly instruct the Assembly Clerks to examine all Acts of Assembly relating to ETS staff and to revise and update the relevant Acts to ensure consistency and accuracy in the light of recent changes. They instruct the Clerks to report on this exercise to the 2021 General Assembly.

REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

(A) CORONAVIRUS

1. **Ministry.** The Board's first priority from the outset of coronavirus restrictions in the UK was the continuation of the Church's ministry, congregation by congregation, within the constraints of lockdown. This continues to be the primary focus of the Board. The Board is supported by the COVID-19 Group, which meets regularly to deal with changes in government restrictions, digest government guidance and provide information and advice to congregations. The Board acknowledges the significant adjustments made by congregations in responding to government and COVID-19 Group advice and guidance. The Board is concerned that ministry continues as far as possible whilst also keeping people safe and well and urges all congregations to move carefully and appropriately in line with guidance as the situation changes.

2. **Finance.** The Board's second priority is to ensure that the church receives the level of income needed to sustain its ministers in congregations, its training, mission and support functions. The Board is grateful for the work of congregations, Deacons' Courts and treasurers in securing income during church closures by helping people to support the Church financially through non-cash methods of giving e.g., bank transfers, standing orders and on-line. The Church Offices can provide support to any congregations looking for additional advice on non-cash giving.

However, despite, the steps taken by some congregations, congregational income has declined from 2019 and remittance income to date is below budget. As a result, the Board forecasts a significant deficit for this year. The level of projected deficit would not place the Church in immediate financial challenge and is only an estimate at this stage. Nonetheless, as a denomination we cannot sustain ongoing deficits and therefore, the Board is monitoring the situation closely including making detailed monthly analyses of remittances. It is also currently reviewing budgets for 2021 onwards. The Board would encourage our people to continue to give as the Lord has prospered them and urge our congregations to maintain the 2019 remittances as the minimum threshold for 2020 and to exceed this wherever possible. The Board remains confident in the Lord's provision for us as we seek, with his help and guidance, to navigate this crisis.

DONALD FORSYTH, *Chairman*
CALLUM MACDONALD, *Vice-Chairman*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

(A) CORONAVIRUS

1. The General Assembly thank the Board for fulfilling its remit in assessing the risks facing the Church as a result of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. They also thank the Board's COVID-19 Group for its advice and guidance and remind all Kirk Sessions to comply with COVID-19 Group guidance as the situation develops.

2. The General Assembly instruct the Board through its COVID-19 Group to continue its diligence in assessing risks facing the Church during the current crisis. They instruct them to take such steps as are necessary to mitigate identified risks to public health and to the reputation of the Church.

3. The General Assembly commend the UK and Scottish Governments to the ongoing prayers of the Church as they continue to navigate the coronavirus crisis. They thank the NHS and other organisations for the care and support given to those affected and their families.

4. The General Assembly note the Board's oversight of finances during the pandemic and urge Treasurers, Deacons' Courts and Finance Committees to ensure that remittances and income reports are submitted monthly to the church offices. They encourage the members of the church to continue to give in accordance with how the Lord has prospered them.

REPORT
OF THE
MISSION BOARD

(A) LOCALLY SUBSIDISED CHARGES

1. *Locally Subsidised Charges.* There are two Locally Subsidised Charges under the oversight of the Board: South Uist and Benbecula, and Dunblane.

1.1. *Dunblane.* Act 22, Class 2, May 2019 details that Dunblane is currently on the appointment of a Locally Subsidised Charge on a three-year terminable/renewable appointment. The Board received a petition from the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll seeking permission for the Dunblane congregation to be granted permission to call a minister on a five-year terminable/renewable appointment according to the provisions of Act 1, Class 1, 2018, anent the Sustentation Fund, paragraph 3.4. The Board noted the encouragement of the numerical and financial growth in the congregation of Dunblane over the past year. The Petition appears in Appendix 1 of the Report. The Board recommends that the Petition's crave be granted.

(B) ASSISTANTSHIPS

1. *Assistantships.* The Board has received one application seeking to revoke the permission to call an Assistant Minister.

1.1. *Glasgow City.* The Board received a request from the congregation of Glasgow City Free Church to revoke permission to call an Assistant Minister, as granted under Act 18, Class 2, 2019. The Board noted that the request was supported by the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll. The Board approved the request and recommends that Act 18, Class 2, 2019 be repealed and that the current remittance arrangement required by Act 18, Class 2, 2013 anent Assistantships be terminated for the congregation of Glasgow City.

REV. DR ROBERT J. AKROYD, *Chairman*
REV. DAVID MACLEOD, *Vice-Chairman*

APPENDIX ONE

Petition of the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll

Dunblane

1. To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland appointed to meet at Edinburgh on 18th May 2020, the Petition of the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll humbly shows:
2. Whereas the congregation of Dunblane became vacant following the retiral of Rev. Alasdair MacDonald on 30th September 2014;
3. Whereas the General Assembly (Act 22, 2019) granted to the congregation of Dunblane the status of a Locally Subsidised Charge in accordance with Act 4, 2013 (Act anent Locally Subsidised Charges);
4. Whereas Rev. Allan Shearer was inducted to the charge on 5th October 2019 in terms of the said Acts;
5. Whereas the givings of the congregation have markedly increased so that their income for 2019 was £51,300;
6. Whereas the congregation desire to have the minister's appointment extended to five years in place of the present three years;
7. Whereas following meetings of the Kirk Session, Deacons' Court and Congregation, a Sustentation Schedule was completed and approved showing the improved income and the request that the congregation be given the status of a terminable/renewable charge in accordance with Act 1, 2018;

8. Whereas at their meeting in January 2020 the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll approved the said Sustentation Schedule and application to give the congregation the status of a terminable/renewable charge;

Wherefore, may it please your Venerable Court to receive the Petition and grant its crave. Noting the recommendation of the Mission Board, they amend Act 22, 2019, to the extent that they grant the status of a terminable/renewable charge to the congregation of Dunblane Free Church in terms of Act 1, 2018, s.6, Mr Shearer's appointment to be continuous with his original induction.

Or do otherwise in their wisdom they may see fit. And your petitioners will ever pray.

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

(A) LOCALLY SUBSIDISED ARRANGEMENTS

1. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll regarding the appointment of a five-year reviewable appointment for the congregation of Dunblane and, noting the recommendation of the Mission Board, grant its crave. They terminate the locally subsidised arrangements for ministry at Dunblane under the provisions of Act 14, Class 2, 2013. They declare that the appointment of the current minister, Rev. Allan Shearer, be on the basis of a five-year reviewable appointment according to the Act 1, Class 1, 2018, Paragraph 3.4, and that his appointment be continuous with his original induction to the charge. They repeal Act 22, Class 2, May 2019.

(B) ASSISTANTSHIPS

1. The General Assembly receive the request from the congregation of Glasgow City Free Church and the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll regarding the revocation of the permission to call an Assistant Minister and, noting the recommendation of the Mission Board, grant the request. They revoke the permission of the congregation of Glasgow City Free Church to appoint an Assistant Minister and they terminate the remittance arrangement required by Act 18, Class 2, 2013 anent Assistantships with immediate effect. They repeal Act 18, Class 2, 2019.

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS
OF THE COMMISSION OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**

At Edinburgh and within the Free Presbytery Hall there on Wednesday 2nd October 2019, which day a quorum of the Commission appointed by last General Assembly being met, Rev. Donald G Macdonald was called to the Chair, and the meeting was constituted with devotional exercises.

1. Note of Business

The Principal Clerk submitted a note of the business to come before the Commission of Assembly as authorised by the General Assembly, *Act 9, Class 2, 2019*.

2. Tabling of Acts and Proceedings of May 2019 General Assembly

The Acts and Proceedings of the 2019 General Assembly were tabled by the Principal Clerk.

The Commission of Assembly met in private.

3. Board of Ministry Report – Rev. Gavino Fioretti

The Commission of Assembly called for the report of the Board of Ministry which was presented by Rev. Alasdair M. Macleod. Mr Macleod presented the Board's report on the application of Rev. Gavino Fioretti to be added to the Roll of Ministers Without Charge Eligible for a Call.

3.1 Presbytery Petition. The Petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth addressed to the 2019 General Assembly was noted as follows:

Unto the Venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland indicted to meet in Edinburgh on Monday 20th May 2019, the Petition of the Rev. Gavino Fioretti humbly shows that:

1. Whereas your Petitioner was inducted to the charge of Edinburgh Leith Elder Memorial on 20th April 2013, and ministered there until resigning his charge on 28th June 2016 in order to work as a missionary in Italy;
2. Whereas your Petitioner left his charge as a minister of the Church in good standing;
3. Whereas your Petitioner was placed on the Roll of Resigned & Retired Ministers in terms of Act 34, Class 2, 2012;
4. Whereas your Petitioner has worked as a missionary in the congregation of Cristiani Biblici Insieme in Sesto Calende (Italy), as well as preaching and lecturing in the church of Nuova Vita in Bologna and other congregations in Italy;
5. Whereas your Petitioner now, in the providence of God, has a sense of God's call to return to the UK and if it is God's will to serve the church in Scotland;
6. Whereas your Petitioner now wishes to make himself available for a Call by a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland;
7. Whereas Act 15, Class 2, 2017, paragraph 5.5, states that a minister whose name is on the *Roll of Resigned Ministers* and who desires to have his name transferred to the *Register of Ministers without Charge Available for Call* shall petition the General Assembly through the Presbytery within whose bounds he is resident at the time;

8. Whereas your Petitioner has not been resident within the bounds of any Presbytery of the Free Church of Scotland while carrying out his ministry in Italy;
9. Whereas your Petitioner is bringing his desire to have his name transferred to the Register of Ministers without Charge Available for Call through the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth, the Presbytery in which he was last a member;
10. Whereas the Presbytery is supportive of your Petitioner's application;

Wherefore it is humbly requested that the General Assembly take these premises into their consideration and grant that your Petitioner be transferred from the Roll of Resigned and Retired Ministers to the Register of Ministers without Charge Available for Call.

Or do otherwise as in their wisdom they may deem best.

And your Petitioner will ever pray.

3.2 The Finding. It was moved, seconded and agreed to that:

1. The Commission of Assembly receive the report of the Board of Ministry regarding the Petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth and Rev. Gavino Fioretti and they grant its crave.
2. They instruct that the name of Rev. Gavino Fioretti be transferred from the Roll of Resigned to the Roll of Ministers Without Charge Eligible for Call.
3. They further instruct the Chairman of the Mission Board to provide pastoral support and counsel to Mr Fioretti on his return to Scotland.

The Commission of Assembly met in open court.

4. Board of Trustees Report

The Commission of Assembly called for the report of the Board of Trustees regarding the appointment of the Editor of *The Record* and the appointment of a Parliamentary Officer which was presented by Chairman, Mr James Fraser.

4.1 The Finding. It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

1. The Commission of Assembly appoint Mr John Macdonald as Editor of *The Record* effective from 2nd October 2019. They declare that Mr Macdonald's appointment be according to terms of Act 8, Class 2, 2015.
2. The Commission of Assembly note that the Board of Trustees is not yet able to recommend a permanent appointment to the role. They instruct the Board to continue to pursue the matter and to bring a report to the March 2020 Commission of Assembly.

5. Appointment of Moderator-Designate of the 2020 General Assembly

The Commission of Assembly called for the Report of the Assembly Clerks' Office regarding nominations for Moderator-Designate of the General Assembly of 2020. The Principal Clerk reported that the process of inviting nominations for General Assemblies' Moderator-Designate, outlined in Act 13, Class 2, 2017, has been successfully completed for the 2020 General Assembly, and that nominations were in favour of Rev. Neil MacMillan, Cornerstone Church Plant, Edinburgh. The Clerk also reported that Mr MacMillan has agreed to the nomination should he be appointed.

5.1 Finding. It was moved, seconded and agreed that the Commission of Assembly receive the report and that they appoint Rev. Neil MacMillan, minister at Cornerstone Church Plant, Edinburgh, as the Moderator-Designate of the 2020 General Assembly.

6. Assembly Clerks' Report - Examination of Records

The Commission of Assembly called for Assembly Clerks' Report on outstanding matters from the 2019 General Assembly Examination of Records Report, which was presented by the Principal Clerk. The Clerk reported that the submission of the following records for re-examination was still outstanding: Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll, the Presbytery of North America, and the Psalmody and Praise Committee.

6.1 Finding. It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

1. The Commission of Assembly receive the report of the Assembly Clerks Office regarding the examination of records.
 2. The Commission of Assembly authorise the Assembly Clerks to stamp and sign the records of the Ecumenical Relations Committee and that of the ETS Board.
 3. The Commission of Assembly instruct the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll and the Psalmody and Praise Committee to submit their records to the Assembly Clerks Office by 31st October 2019. They authorise the Clerks to attest and sign the said records on successful completion of the re-examination.
 4. The Commission of Assembly instruct the Presbytery of North America to report to the Assembly Clerks Office on the completion of the examination of records by 31st December 2019.
 5. The Commission of Assembly instruct the Assembly Clerks to include a report on the outstanding items above in the Assembly Business Committee's report on the examination of records to the 2020 General Assembly.
- 7. Minutes** The Minutes of the meeting were read and approved.
- 8. Close** There being no further business, the meeting was closed with prayer.

Being the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Commission on 4th March 2020

At Edinburgh and within the Free Presbytery Hall there on Wednesday 4th March 2020, which day a quorum of the Commission appointed by last General Assembly being met, Rev. Donald G. Macdonald was called to the Chair, and the meeting was constituted with devotional exercises.

1. Quorum of Commission

There being eight Commissioners present including six ministers the following Commissioners joined the meeting by telephone: Mr Callum Macdonald and Mr Sandy Finlay, Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross, and Mr John A. Gillies, Presbytery of Skye and Wester Ross.

2. Note of Business

The Principal Clerk submitted a note of the business to come before the Commission of Assembly as authorised by the General Assembly, *Act 9, Class 2, 2019*.

3. Board of Trustees – Parliamentary Officer

The Commission of Assembly called for the report of the Board of Trustees regarding the appointment of a Parliamentary Officer. The report was presented by Chairman, Mr James Fraser.

3.1 *The Finding.* The Commission of Assembly note that the Board of Trustees continue to pursue the appointment of a new Parliamentary Officer. They instruct the Board to bring a report on the matter to the 2020 General Assembly.

4. Mission Board – Admission of Congregations

The Commission of Assembly called for the report of the Mission Board regarding the application of Abbeygreen Church, Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire, to be admitted as a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland. The report was presented by Rev. Dr Robert Akroyd, Chairman.

4.1 *The Finding.* The finding of the Commission of Assembly was as follows:

1. The Commission of Assembly establish the body of Christians worshipping in the Abbeygreen Church as a fully sanctioned pastoral charge of the Free Church of Scotland, effective from 31st March 2020.
2. The Commission of Assembly declare that the new congregation shall be known as Abbeygreen Church within the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll under the ministry of the Rev. David Carmichael on his admission as a minister of the Free Church of Scotland.
3. They declare Mr Carmichael's appointment to be without restriction according to the provisions of Act 1, Class 1, 2018 regarding the Sustentation Fund and grant him a seat in the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll.
4. They instruct the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll to meet on 31st March 2020 to appoint General Assessor Elders to the Kirk Session so that the Congregation may proceed to an election and ordination of office-bearers as soon as practically possible.
5. They further instruct the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll to appoint a meeting with the congregation for a service of public worship for the purpose of formally establishing the Congregation and welcoming the congregation and the minister formally into the Presbytery.

The Commission of Assembly met in private.

5. Board of Ministry – Admission of Rev. David Carmichael

The Commission of Assembly called for the report of the Board of Ministry on the application of Rev. David Carmichael to be admitted as a minister of the Free Church of Scotland. The report was presented by Rev. Angus MacRae, Chairman. Prior to presenting the Board's report, the Commission of Assembly noted with sadness the passing of Rev. Dr David Ford, former Clerk of the Board of Ministry, and recorded its thanks for his services to the Church.

5.1 *The Finding.* The finding of the Commission of Assembly was as follows:

1. The Commission of Assembly receive the application from Rev. David Carmichael and, noting the recommendation of the Board of Ministry, admit him as an ordained minister of the Free Church of Scotland, with effect from 31st March 2020 and subsequent to him answering the Questions and signing the Formula.
2. The Commission of Assembly instruct the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll to meet on 31st March 2020 and to make arrangements at this meeting for Mr Carmichael to answer the Questions and sign the Formula under their supervision. They instruct the Presbytery Clerk thereafter to notify the Principal Clerk of Assembly by extract of the proceedings of the Presbytery.
3. The Commission of Assembly declare Mr Carmichael to be minister of Abbeygreen Church upon his answering the Questions and signing of the Formula under the direction of the Presbytery, and upon Abbeygreen Church being admitted as a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland.
4. The Commission of Assembly instruct Mr Carmichael to complete the Presbyterian Church Ministry Module, available through Edinburgh Theological Seminary, either by attendance or by distance learning.

5. The Commission of Assembly note the recommendations of the Board of Ministry and accordingly commend those who have already given their help to Rev. David Carmichael and the Abbeygreen congregation in their application process. They instruct the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll and the Mission Board to take all possible steps to provide ongoing support, encouragement and a wholehearted welcome to the minister and congregation at Abbeygreen Church, Lesmahagow.
6. The Commission of Assembly order the supporting documents to be held *in retentis*.

The Commission of Assembly met in open court.

- 5.2 **Welcome.** The Moderator formally welcomed Rev. David Carmichael and representatives of the Abbeygreen Congregation after which he called on Rev. Angus Macrae to lead in prayer.
6. **Minutes.** The Minutes of the meeting were read and approved.
7. **Close.** There being no further business, the meeting was closed with prayer.

STANDING ORDERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A. AS TO REPRESENTATION OF PRESBYTERIES

1. That all Commissions, transmitted to the Clerk of Assembly, shall be revised by him, in so far as regards their regularity in point of form, and that the Clerk shall prepare a Report on the subject and submit the same to the Committee appointed by the Assembly for the revising of Commissions.
2. That the Clerk of the Assembly shall furnish all Presbytery Clerks with printed copies of the form of Commission to Representatives hitherto in use, and also printed copies of the *bona fide* Certificates to be used by Kirk Sessions, according to Act 8, Assembly 1853, and Act 9, Assembly 1863, for certifying elders who are chosen to be Commissioners to the General Assembly.
3. That there shall be attached to Commissions a statement, certified by the Presbytery Clerk, of the number of charges in each Presbytery at the date of the Commission, and of any changes that have taken place during the previous year.
4. That Clerks of Presbyteries shall send intimation to the Clerk of Assembly on the death of a colleague, or of the induction of a colleague immediately after that event has taken place.
5. That the Assembly Clerks' Office shall consider in the month of January annually any changes in Presbyteries which may have occurred in the course of the previous year, for the purpose of ascertaining the effects as regards representation and shall immediately thereafter intimate to the Presbyteries concerned what will be their representation in the ensuing General Assembly.
6. That each Presbytery shall appoint Commissioners to the General Assembly comprising an equal number of Ministers and Elders according to the notification of representation issued by the Assembly Clerks' Office.
7. That the decision of the Assembly Clerks' Office, so intimated to Presbyteries, shall be subject to review by the General Assembly, if appealed against or dissented from.
8. That should any question arise between the month of January and the meeting of Assembly, not provided for by these Orders, the Assembly Clerks' Office shall consider these and how to dispose of such questions.

B. AS TO THE TRANSMISSION TO THE CLERK OF ASSEMBLY OF PAPERS FOR THE ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

1. That all Commissions shall be sent by Clerks of their respective Presbyteries so as to be in the hands of the Clerk of the General Assembly not later than one week before the meeting of the Business Committee referred to in C.1 below. The Assembly Clerk shall give due notice to the Clerks of Presbyteries of the date of the meeting to facilitate this. The Assembly Clerk shall report on all Commissions and Elders' Certificates to the Assembly Business Committee when it meets, and the Committee shall examine these Commissions and Certificates and include an item on them in its report. All Commissions and Certificates outstanding at the opening of the Assembly shall be reported to the Assembly by the Assembly Clerk at the First Session.
2. That all papers intended to be transmitted to the Assembly - namely, Memorials, Overtures, Petitions, Applications, References, Complaints and Appeals, with Extracts of Minutes of Inferior Courts, relative thereto, as also Reasons of Complaint or Appeal; and in cases of Libel with the Defences and Evidence adduced - shall be transmitted to the Clerk of Assembly not later than 15th April in each year, in order to be printed in sufficient numbers for the use of the members of Assembly; and that papers passed by the Inferior Courts at a later date shall be transmitted to the Clerk without delay. The Clerk of Assembly shall lay such papers before the Assembly Business Committee and parties concerned shall be in attendance at the meeting. The Committee shall report to the First Session of the General Assembly on the receivability of the documents. In the event of the Committee resolving not to receive a particular document, the parties concerned shall have a right of appeal against the finding of the Committee to the General Assembly.
3. That Presbyteries shall transmit to the Clerk of Assembly their Returns to Overtures not later than one week before the meeting referred to in C.1 below; that said Presbyterial Returns shall consist of certified extracts from the Minutes of Presbytery; and that a separate leaf of paper shall be used for the Return on each Overture sent down by the General Assembly.

4. That all such papers shall be printed by the Clerk, except such papers as he may consider undesirable to print; that papers not printed shall be submitted in manuscript; and that if the Committee does not endorse the view of the Clerk, the papers shall forthwith be printed for the use of the Assembly.

5. That these regulations shall not apply to Petitions for authority to sell congregational property, which Petitions shall not be transmitted through the Business Committee but shall be forwarded from the relevant Deacons' Court (or Finance Committee), through the Presbytery of the bounds, to the Principal Clerk who shall lay each Petition before the Board of Trustees in accordance with the procedure stipulated in Act 14, Class 2, 2015.

6. That in regard to returns from Presbyteries to any Overture transmitted to them under the Barrier Act the total number of Presbyteries in the Church shall constitute the appropriate base for calculating a majority and a non-return shall be taken as signifying disapproval of the matter contained in the Overture.

C. AS TO ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE AND ASSEMBLY CLERKS' OFFICE

1. That the Business Committee of Assembly shall comprise the Principal Clerk, the Assistant Clerks and the Clerks of all the home Presbyteries and shall meet at a convenient point not later than 15th April annually, to examine all papers in the hands of the Principal Clerk due to come before the Assembly. The Committee shall appoint its own Convener and the Principal Clerk shall act as Clerk to the Committee.

2. That the Committee at this meeting shall formulate a programme of business for the Assembly, after giving due consideration to the following:

- a) the number of Reports from Committees and Boards and the length of time thought to be required for each, taking account of which Reports, or sections of Reports, should be the subject of less formal discussion;
- b) the periods of informal discussion rather than formal debate that the Assembly may wish to take up;
- c) all other items of business due to come before the Assembly and estimated time thought to be required for each;
- d) the number of delegates expected at the Assembly;
- e) any Appeals, Dissents and Complaints, Overtures, Petitions or References or any other cases coming to the Assembly from the inferior courts.

3. That the Business Committee take up the examination of Presbytery records at the April statutory meeting and report on their findings in the Committee's report to the General Assembly.

4. That the Assembly Clerks' Office shall present its report to the Assembly at the first session and its report shall be bound with all the other reports to be distributed in advance of the Assembly.

5. That the Clerks shall in their Report designate as routine those Petitions they consider ought to be in this category, and to recommend this to the Assembly in its report, at which point amendments to the contrary may be given in without prior notice, the final decision on whether any Petition be so treated to lie with the General Assembly; that if there be no objection to a Petition being classified as routine the Motion relating to it in the Proposed Deliverance of the Report shall be moved and seconded. An objection to a proposal to treat a Petition as routine or an amendment to the Motion relating to it, will require that the Petition be taken up at a suitable point in the Assembly Programme.

6. That the Assembly Clerks' Office shall see that all papers presented to them in Cases from Inferior Courts, whether forming part of the Record, or produced in evidence before said Courts, have been duly dated and numbered by the Clerk of said Courts, and marked with his initial; and that the Assembly Clerks' Office shall not receive any paper which is not authenticated, unless upon special cause shown, to be reported by them to the General Assembly.

D. AS TO PRINTING OF PAPERS IN CASES COMING UP TO THE ASSEMBLY

1. That all such papers shall be printed by the Clerk, except any papers which he considers may lead to discussions in the meeting referred to in C.1 above; that he shall retain these in manuscript, and submit them in that form to that meeting, and that a list of them shall be appended to the volume containing the papers passing the Clerk.
2. That in cases of discipline brought before the Assembly by reference from a Presbytery or Synod, or by complaint by a minority of the Court, the expense of printing shall be borne by the Assembly Clerk's Office; in other circumstances by the Complainer or Appellant; and that in all other cases, such as Petitions, References not in Causes, Memorials, etc. the expense shall be borne by the party having interest in same, or desiring a deliverance from the Assembly.
3. That all such papers be printed in a form corresponding to pages of the volume of Acts of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland.
4. That all such papers shall be stitched together and provided with an alphabetical index; and that a copy thereof shall be placed in the hands of each member of the Assembly.
5. That a copy of every printed paper shall be kept by the Clerk of Assembly to be bound up and kept among the Records of Assembly.

E. AS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. Devotional Exercises

1. That a bell shall be rung for one minute; and members shall take their places in the House before the Moderator takes the Chair; that the Assembly Hall doors shall be closed each day during the opening exercises to prevent interruption by persons entering the House during that time; and that the Assembly shall spend the first hour or more of the first session of the second full day of their meeting in devotional exercises.
2. That any proposal for a pause in the Assembly's proceedings with a view to engage in special devotional exercise, shall be made to the Assembly only through the Moderator.

2. Committee for Printing the Acts

1. That the Assembly Clerks' Office shall make arrangements for the printing the Acts of Assembly and that they shall arrange that the Acts be divided into two classes - Class 1: those which have passed the Barrier Act; Class 2: Acts which are of General Interest to the Church.

3. Reports of Committees

1. That the Reports of all Boards and Committees reporting to the General Assembly [excepting only a report from any meeting of the Assembly Business Committee with the purpose of reporting on changes to nominations to vacancies on Board and Committees] shall, together with Deliverances to be proposed, be transmitted for printing to the Clerk of Assembly not later than the first day of April. All Reports shall be stitched together and sent to Commissioners to the General Assembly not later than ten days before the meeting of the Assembly.
2. That Reports shall not be engrossed in the Record, but, after being printed, a copy of each, certified by the Clerk as being that given in to the Assembly, shall be kept *in retentis*, and the Reports shall be appended to the printed volume of the Acts and Proceedings of Assembly.
3. That verbal Reports shall not be received, and no Sub-committee shall give in any Report to the Assembly except by express leave of the Assembly.
4. That paragraphs of a proposed Deliverance on the Report of a Standing Committee shall be numbered, and the mover shall not be required to read it when it is already in the hands of members of Assembly.
5. That when any Committee is appointed during the Assembly's sittings it shall be competent to move amendments to the proposed Deliverance on its report without previous notice.

6. That it shall be competent for Commissioners to give notice in writing of questions to be put to the person presenting a Report to the General Assembly - this without prejudice to the right to add supplementary questions or the right of members generally to propose questions from the floor.

4. The Submission of Amendments and Addenda

1. That amendments and addenda to the proposed deliverances of reports taken during the first session may be moved without previous notice.

2. That amendments and addenda to the proposed deliverances of all other reports taken in subsequent session shall be given in and read by the Clerk as specified in the following table. Amendments or addenda given in after the specified deadline shall not be accepted.

<i>Reports due to be taken up during:</i>	<i>Amendments and addenda to be given in before:</i>
2nd Session (Tuesday morning and afternoon)	Adjournment Monday evening
3rd Session (Tuesday evening)	Suspension Tuesday lunchtime
4th Session (Wednesday morning and afternoon)	Adjournment Tuesday evening
5th Session (Wednesday evening)	Suspension Wednesday lunchtime
6th Session (Thursday morning and afternoon)	Adjournment Wednesday evening

5. The Reading of Speeches and Length of Speeches

1. That, previously to the discussion of any question which does not arise upon or contemplate the approval or disapproval of the Report of a Committee, the House shall determine, in such manner as may seem expedient, the order of priority belonging to the motions given notice of, and that, when a motion approving of a Report has been made and seconded, the House shall determine in the same manner the order of priority belonging to any other motions given notice of.

2. That in the discussion of any question the proposer of each motion may address the House for not longer than 25 minutes, and the seconder for 15 minutes; and no subsequent speaker shall address the House for a longer period than 10 minutes; and that these limits shall only be exceeded when the Moderator shall have ascertained that the House desires any speaker to continue and shall intimate the ascertained desire to that effect.

3. That when a Convener or Chairman, not being a member of Assembly, is permitted to present the Report of his Committee or Board, the Convener or Chairman and the mover of the Deliverance shall be required to come to an arrangement by which their combined speeches shall not exceed the time normally granted to the mover of a motion in terms of Standing Order E.4.3, or as that Order may be amended by this or any subsequent Assembly. It shall be competent for the person who presents a Committee's Report or Board's Report to answer questions relating to the Report and to reply to the discussion, even if he be not a member of Assembly.

4. That a member of the Assembly in moving or seconding an amendment shall confine himself to the matter of the amendment and shall have the right to speak at a later stage to other matters in the Report and other amendments, provided that the total time taken in speaking shall conform to Standing Order E.4.3.

5. That with the exception of those permitted to present a Committee's Report or Board's Report, or an Overture, Petition or Reference, it shall not be competent for anyone other than a member of the Assembly to ask questions or take part in the discussion, although the Assembly may call on persons who are not members of Assembly to answer questions on specific items of business for reasons of information and clarification. Persons called upon in such instances shall confine themselves strictly to answering the questions put.

6. Sessions of Informal Discussion

1. That sessions for informal discussion may be held during the Assembly in addition to the formal discussion specified in 4 above, on a recommendation in the Assembly Clerks' Report. The Assembly Clerks' Office shall make its

recommendations at the First Session through its Report to the Assembly. All commissioners shall be expected to attend these discussion sessions. While no formal proposal or motion may be presented at these sessions the discussion ought nevertheless to give prolonged consideration to the items specified by the Assembly. The Sessions shall be chaired by the Moderator.

2. That Committees and Boards shall highlight with an asterisk items in their annual Reports which they consider require substantive debate, in order to assist the Assembly Clerks' Office with its recommendations about informal discussion sessions and to aid commissioners in their preparations for the Assembly. This shall not preclude any commissioner asking questions about, or speaking to, other items in reports.

7. The Conducting of Causes

1. That Counsel shall not be heard at the Bar in any Causes which may come before the House.

2. That when a Presbytery acquiesces in the sentence of a Synod, it shall not be entitled to appear as a separate party at the Bar of the Assembly, but the members of Presbytery may nevertheless be heard as members of Synod.

3. That in no case shall there be more than two speakers for each party at the Bar, including the reply to which the appellant or complainer shall be entitled; and when there are more than two parties, there shall only be one speaker, and one speech for each, besides the reply - it being understood that where there is more than one complainer, each shall be considered as a different party only in case of its appearing to the Assembly that the complaints rest upon distinctly separate grounds.

4. That, previously to hearing the parties in any Cause, the Clerk shall read the following announcement, - viz., "The members are reminded that justice requires the pleadings as at the Bar to be heard by all those who vote in the Cause, and that, in particular, no member ought to vote against either side of the Bar who has not heard the pleadings on that side".

5.1 That the Clerk of Assembly shall not issue the papers to the members of Assembly, with reference to cases which he thinks require to be conducted with closed doors until specially instructed by the Assembly to do so; but he shall report such cases to the Convener of the Business Committee, for its information immediately after its appointment;

5.2 That the Business Committee shall, in their first Report, specify any case which, in their judgment, requires to be conducted with closed doors; and any case which does not appear to them of that character, although the Clerk may have reported it as such;

5.3 That, in all cases thus reported on by the Business Committee the Assembly shall itself determine, by a special deliverance, at what stage of the proceedings the papers shall be issued to the members; and

5.4 That in every case which the Assembly appoints to be conducted with closed doors, the instruction to issue the papers shall be accompanied by a special exhortation to the members to keep them private.

8. Motions and Votes

1. That every motion, whether original or amended, if not already in the hands of the Clerk, shall be given into the Clerk in writing, as soon as it shall have been made to the House.

2. That the person who makes the first motion shall be entitled to the privilege of giving a reply, in which new matter must not be introduced; and that thereafter the debate shall be held to be definitely closed, and no other person shall be entitled to speak excepting with regard to the manner of putting a vote.

3. That all motions after the first that are truly amendments on the first motion shall be disposed of in accordance with Standing Order No. E.7.6 below, and that when an amendment raises an issue different from that in other amendments, it shall be dealt with as a direct counter-motion.

4. That where there are only two motions before the House, the question put to the vote shall be second or first motion.

5. That when there are three motions, the first question shall be, whether the second or third motion shall be put as amendment against the first; and the second question shall be, whether the first motion or the amendment so fixed shall be the decision of the House.

6. That when there are more than three motions, the first question shall be whether the last proposed shall be put as the amendment, and so till only three remain, when the procedure shall be as prescribed in the immediately preceding sub-section.
7. That in Causes, it shall not be competent to move an amendment to the motion, unless it be of such a nature as to decide the case, or to forward it in its progress.
8. That when any proposal has been submitted in the Report of a Committee any motion for approval of such proposal shall take precedence of any counter-motion or amendment.

9. Mode of taking the Vote

1. That on a division being called for, all parties who are not members, but have the privilege of entering the House, shall withdraw.
2. That on a division being called for the Clerk shall announce that no member ought to vote against a motion or amendment who has not been in attendance during the discussion thereof; that thereafter no one shall be permitted to enter the House till the vote has been taken and the result declared; that two or four Tellers shall be appointed by the Moderator, drawn equally from supporters of each motion before the House; and that these Tellers shall take their place at the Clerk's table. But when the issue of a vote by show of hands is not immediately obvious the Tellers shall count the votes seat by seat taking up their positions at the ends of each seat in turn in order to do so.
3. That the vote shall, in the discretion of the House, be taken either by calling of the Roll or by a show of hands, or by card.
4. That as soon as the vote shall have been taken, the Tellers shall report the state of vote to the Clerk of Assembly, who shall write it down, and announce it to the House.
5. That the Report of the Tellers, when announced to the House, shall be held as final and conclusive, and not subject to any revision by scrutiny or otherwise.

10. Dissents

1. That no dissents against any deliverance of the Assembly shall be given in until the matter in which it is pronounced is, for that session, disposed of, the Minutes are completed and adjusted, and the House is ready to proceed to other business.
2. That prepared reasons for dissent or complaint be not engrossed in the Minutes of the Assembly or its Commission but held *in retentis*. Where a brief statement is written at the time of lodging a dissent, it may at the discretion of the Court be engrossed in the Minute. At meetings of the Commission, members of the Commission shall have the right to request permission for leave to Complain by submitting to the Assembly Clerk reasons for a Complaint within ten days, such reasons to be held *in retentis*. Both the Commission and Assembly may refuse to receive Reasons if they are not couched in respectful language. Where Reasons for Dissent are held *in retentis*, the General Assembly or their Commission shall appoint a Committee to answer Reasons, except where the Reasons are deemed frivolous or unspecific. When the Assembly appoints such a Committee, it shall report to the Commission of Assembly at its October meeting. If such a Committee is appointed by the Commission, it shall report to the next stated meeting of the Commission, or to the following General Assembly, whichever falls first. The Committee's Report shall contain both the Reasons and the Answers, and, if the Report is adopted, it shall be engrossed in the Minutes.

11. Drafts of Declaratory or Interim Acts and Overtures

That the Draft of any proposed Declaratory or Interim Act, as also the Draft of any Overture which it is proposed to transmit to Presbyteries for their opinion in terms of the Barrier Act, shall be laid on the Table of the Assembly, and printed and circulated among the members, at least one session of the Assembly before a motion be made for the passing of such Declaratory or Interim Act, or for the transmission of such Overture to the Presbyteries of the Church.

12. Letters addressed to the Moderator

That all letters addressed to the Moderator for the purpose of being communicated to the Assembly, shall, in the first instance, be laid by him before the Assembly Business Committee, who shall advise the Moderator as to the way of disposing of them.

13. Deputations from other Churches, etc.

1. That the list of corresponding Churches and Societies shall be as determined by the General Assembly from time to time on the recommendation of the Assembly Business Committee.
2. That deputies from corresponding Churches or Societies shall forward their commission or letters of introduction so as to reach the Clerk of Assembly not later than the first day of May in each year; and he shall submit the same to the Assembly Business Committee so that arrangements may be made for the deputies to address the General Assembly.
3. That deputies from Churches and Societies other than those aforesaid shall likewise forward Commissions or letters of introduction to reach the Clerk of Assembly not later than the first day of March, and he shall report the same to the Commission of Assembly meeting in that month, who shall be empowered to decide which of the deputies shall be received by, and invited to address the Assembly. In the event of failure of the Commission to meet, the Assembly Business Committee shall meet at the earliest opportunity, and shall decide which deputies shall be received by, and invited to address the Assembly.
4. That in the case of strangers who may be desirous of being introduced to the Assembly and addressing the House, notice thereof shall be conveyed to the Moderator, who shall report the same to the Assembly Business Committee, that they may advise in the matter.

14. Examination of Synod and Presbytery Records

1. That the Synod and Presbytery Records shall be submitted to the Assembly Clerks' Office not later than 31st March.
2. That the Assembly Clerks' Office shall examine the Synod and Presbytery Records and report to the General Assembly through the Business Committee on the results of the examination.
3. That the Assembly Clerk is authorised to attest as correct such records as have passed the examination with regard to form and content.
4. That the Business Committee report on the examination of Synod and Presbytery Records be sent to Presbyteries and engrossed in their records.

15. Examination of Minutes of Boards and Committees

1. That the Minutes of Committees and Boards shall be called for at the first Session of the Assembly.
2. That a Committee shall be appointed for examining the same, who shall fill up a schedule with the information required by the Assembly regarding each book - said schedule to be returned when the report of the said committees shall be called for.
3. That a copy of the Committee's Report, as sustained by the Assembly, shall be transmitted to Boards and Committees, and engrossed in their Record.

16. Additional General Assembly Committees

1. That a Committee be appointed to prepare a report on deceased minister and elders for the period commencing from the last Assembly with the report presented to the General Assembly at the last Session.
2. That a Committee be appointed to act as the Receiving Party for the visit of the Lord High Commissioner.

17. Printing of Assembly's Proceedings, etc.

1. That the Minutes of Commission, together with roll of matters to be taken up on the following days, and lists of members of Committees, be printed and placed in the hands of the Members of Assembly on the opening day.

2. That when a motion is duly seconded, and in possession of the Assembly it shall not be competent to make any alterations upon it without the permission of the House, excepting in the shape of an amendment, or second or third motion, as the case may be, regularly proposed to the Assembly.

18. Minutes

That the minutes adopted at any of the sessions of the Assembly be passed to Commissioners at the end of each day in electronic form where possible and that they be approved of only at a morning session of the Assembly, with the exception of the minutes of the last day of the Assembly's sittings, which minutes shall be read over and approved of before the rising of the Assembly.

19. Standing Orders

1. That the Standing Orders be held as read by vote in the First Session of the Assembly, and immediately before the appointment of Committees of the Assembly, and that they be printed in the first day's proceedings.

2. That the operation of Standing Orders may be suspended on a motion without notice, and by resolution of the Assembly, carried by a majority of at least two thirds of its Commissioners.

3. That a proposal to change Standing Orders must come by overture from the floor of the General Assembly or from the Assembly Business Committee.

4. That a proposal to suspend Standing Orders may not be made for the purpose of introducing new items of business to the General Assembly other than for emergency items or items of a time-critical nature.

20. Conduct of Commissioners

1. That courtesy demands that all sessions of the Assembly be attended by Commissioners, and that private meetings should not be held during the sessions of the Assembly.

2. That with the exception of comfort breaks the Moderator shall require the permission of the Assembly for absence from the chair during sittings of the Assembly. The Moderator shall not undertake visits on behalf of the Assembly without their prior authority.

3. That the use of all forms of social or electronic communications media during private sessions of the Assembly when confidential matters are being discussed or debated is prohibited.

4. That the use of all forms of social media for the purpose criticising or passing judgement on decisions of the General Assembly or on its Commissioners is prohibited for the sake of the honour and good name of the General Assembly.

21. Recording of Assembly Proceedings

1. Recording of Assembly proceedings by video recorder etc., by television companies, or by sections of the media shall not be permitted unless prior permission has been received from the Assembly Media Officer acting in accordance with guidelines provided by the Assembly Business Committee.

2. Use of flash photography by private individuals during the proceedings of the General Assembly shall not ordinarily be permitted, though exception will be made in cases such as the installation of the Moderator, reception of delegates, and presentation of individuals to the Moderator.

3. Notwithstanding the above, the Assembly Business Committee shall have the power to make arrangements at any time for the recording in any way of any part of the Assembly proceedings by any means they consider appropriate.

22. Media Officer

The General Assembly shall have the Church's Media Officer act as their Media Officer. The Assembly Media Officer shall be responsible *inter alia* for liaison with representatives of the media and giving such guidance as may be necessary for them to carry out their duties.

F. AS TO BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

1. *Types of Committee*

That the business of the Church between one Assembly and the next ensuing shall be carried on by Standing Committees and Boards together with the Assembly Business Committee. Membership of committees, boards and panels in all cases of *ex officio* appointments shall be confined to ministers holding a seat in a Presbytery of the Church or to *bona fide* acting elders of the Church. In all other cases of *ex officio* involvement in the work of Committees and Boards those appointed shall be regarded as consultants to the relevant Committee or Board.

2. *Composition of Standing Boards and Committees*

1. That Standing Boards and Committees shall consist of the following:

1. **Board of Trustees** to discharge the functions of the Board of Trustees as presently constituted; to continue to have members of the Board appointed as directors of the Free Church of Scotland General Trustees' Limited; and to assume oversight of an **Executive Office** comprising the following functions:

1.1. **Administrative Office** to monitor and prepare regular reports on financial performance; to oversee the annual budgeting process; to keep under review matters of legal compliance and risk management; and to provide general administrative support to the Church. The Board shall receive regular reports on financial performance, legal compliance and risk management from the Administrative Office and shall allocate time within its meetings for consideration of these.

1.2 **Assembly Clerks' Office** to make all arrangements for the General Assembly reporting to the General Assembly, either directly or through the Business Committee of the Assembly, in relation to matters connected with the conduct of business at meetings of the General Assembly or meetings of the Commission of Assembly; to receive nominations from Presbyteries for vacancies on committees and boards when they occur, and, following consultation with the relevant committee or board, to make recommendations from these submissions, through the Board, to the General Assembly; to advise on matters of Church practice and procedure in light of the rules and procedures laid down in *The Practice* and in Church legislation and to initiate reviews of the practice or procedures of the Church where these might benefit from modification; to maintain formal relationships with other churches and ecclesiastical bodies; and, in the case of the Principal Clerk of Assembly, to act as Custodian of Titles.

Any proposals from the Assembly Clerks' Office to modify Church practice or procedures shall be reported to the General Assembly through the Board. The Assembly Clerks' Office shall be at liberty to enlist additional assistance as required, and at its discretion, to assist with the fulfilment of the various aspects of its remit.

1.3 **Media Office** to manage relationships with the media, acting as the primary contact point for media enquiries and sourcing comment from appropriate personnel within the Church; to exercise oversight of the Church's website including matters of design and content and similarly to oversee and develop the Church's social media presence; to oversee denominational publications; to identify issues of contemporary interest and importance, develop position papers on such issues and communicate the same effectively to internal and external audiences; and, more generally, to facilitate the flow of information around the Church with a view to stimulating interest and involvement in the Church's work.

1.4 *Membership*: Thirteen members in total including the Principal Clerk of Assembly *ex officio*. The remaining membership shall comprise at least four ministers and at least six office-bearers, of whom up to two might be deacons, appointed by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The General Assembly shall appoint one of the Board, who shall always be an elder, as Chairman, for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The quorum shall be three trustees.

1.5 **Communications Oversight Group** to produce, on an annual basis, material relating to public questions in which the church has an interest with a view to fulfilling our duty to speak the Word of the Lord to those in power in the nation and to maintain a prophetic witness; to exercise oversight of digital communication output and denominational publications; appoint editors and content editors; to facilitate the flow of information about matters of general interest to and from individuals, congregations, presbyteries and Boards of the Church; to oversee the Church's website and

social media and to promote the application of new technology to the work of the Church where appropriate; and to secure an overarching information strategy for the central church.

1.6 *Membership:* Six members in total. The Chair shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees (in consultation with the Mission Board), and other members shall be appointed by the Mission Board (two members) Seminary Board (one member), Board of Ministry (one member) and Board of Trustees (one member in addition to Chair). The Group members will be ministers or elders with an interest and passion for the area. Expert advisers in relation to technology and social media would be invited to input to the Group as and when required. The Group is expected to obviate travel time and costs through the use of communications technology.

1.7 **Media Oversight Group** to support the Church's Media Officer and Parliamentary Officer; to help respond to matters which represent a significant threat to the reputation or impact of the Church; to be consulted on, and help shape major responses to, government consultations and the Church's reaction to government legislation and policy.

1.8 *Membership:* Chairman of Mission Board, Chairman of Board of Trustees, Assembly Clerk, CEO and Mission Director. Given the nature of the work, the Group will conduct its business by telephone and email.

2. **Board of Ministry** to discharge the functions of the Board of Ministry as presently constituted; to assume oversight of matters relating to the working conditions of ministers and other personnel, excluding those connected with the Free Church Offices and the Free Church College; to work with Presbyteries in seeking to further equip ministers and others in areas such as mentoring, leadership and management skills; to consult with Presbyteries and the missions boards in assessing and specifying training needs for ministry candidates in the areas of knowledge, skills and character and to develop appropriate delivery mechanisms prior to, during, and following a formal academic training programme; and to assume responsibility for issues currently remitted to the Panel of Pastoral Advice.

2.1 With reference to the provision of pastoral care and advice, the Board of Ministry shall be at liberty to enlist such additional expertise from around the Church as might be required to deal with situations as they arise.

2.2 The Student Finance Scheme shall be overseen by the Board of Ministry in consultation with the Chief Administrative Officer.

2.3 *Membership:* Nine members in total including the Principal of ETS (or his nominee) and one other member of the ETS Senate appointed annually by the Senate on an *ex officio* basis. The remaining membership of the Board of Ministry shall comprise three ministers and four elders appointed by the General Assembly for a four-year term renewable for one further term of four years. The Chairman shall be appointed from the membership of the Board by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The quorum shall be three members of the Board.

3. **Mission Board** to discharge the functions of the Home Missions Board and the International Missions Board as previously constituted, and to assume responsibility for developing appropriate denominational partnerships at home and abroad, as well as partnerships with other organisations and agencies, in order to enhance the Church's ability to reach out with the Gospel.

3.1 *Membership:* Eight members in total comprising six ministers and two elders appointed by the General Assembly for a four-year term renewable for one further term of four years. The Chairman shall be appointed from the membership of the Board by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The Chairman shall be appointed from the membership of the Board by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The quorum shall be three members of the Board.

4. **ETS Board** to discharge the functions of the Edinburgh Theological Seminary Board as presently constituted.

4.1 *Membership:* Nine members including the College Principal, one member of the College Senate, the Chairman of the Board of Ministry and the President of the Students' Representative Council, all *ex officio*. The remaining membership shall comprise two elders and three ministers appointed by the General Assembly for a four-year term renewable for one further term of four years. Elders appointed to the College Board shall have suitable qualifications or experience in education, preferably tertiary education, or in the administration or promotion of

education. The Chairman shall be appointed from the membership of the Board by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The Chairman shall not be a member of the College Senate. The quorum shall be three members of the Board.

5. **Ecumenical Relations Committee** to promote, foster and develop relations with other denominations and like-minded believers in seeking the propagation of the gospel and the advancement of Christ's kingdom in Scotland and beyond. The Committee will take steps to promote and protect the position of the Free Church of Scotland with respect to her place in the wider Church. The Committee carried out its remit as defined by this Act and as the General Assembly may appoint.

5.1 *Membership:* Seven members in total comprising the Mission Director, the Mission Board Chairman, the Principal Clerk, Assistant Clerk Representative, the Moderator, the Principal of Edinburgh Theological Seminary, and one Elder, appointed for a four-year term, with the Convener appointed by the General Assembly and the Principal Clerk appointed as Clerk to the Committee.

6. **Psalmody & Praise Committee** to discharge the combined functions of the Psalmody Committee and the Special Committee on Praise.

6.1 *Membership:* Six members in total comprising at least two ministers and at least two elders appointed by the General Assembly for a four-year term renewable for one further term of four years. The Convener shall be appointed from the membership of the Committee by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The quorum shall be three members of the Committee.

2. That the termination of the appointment of any member of the Boards and Committees specified above in 1.1-1.6, by death, resignation or discipline, shall be reported as soon as possible after the event to the Assembly Clerks' Office. Upon notification, the Assembly Clerks' Office, in consultation with the relevant Board or Committee, shall proceed to appoint a replacement who shall serve until the ensuing General Assembly at which the relevant Board or Committee shall report on the same.

3. That Presbyteries may nominate elders and ministers from other Presbyteries to fill vacancies on Boards and Committees when there is a shortage of eligible and available nominees within their own bounds. The General Assembly, noting the above declaration, amend Paragraph 2 of Act 48, Class 2, 2008 as follows: The Committee when seeking nominations from Presbyteries shall outline for their information the skills and expertise expected of nominees for each vacancy. Presbyteries shall normally nominate candidates from within their own bounds. When there is a local shortage of available and eligible ministers and elders, Presbyteries may nominate candidates from outwith their own bounds. If a Presbytery is unable to identify a suitable candidate, the Assembly Clerks' Office shall arrange to fill such a vacancy from elsewhere. Appointments made in these cases shall exist for the duration of the term of service specified, unless terminated by death, resignation, translation to another Presbytery or discipline. Presbyteries are directed to ensure that nominees are available, willing and able to serve *before* submitting their names.

4. That in accordance with Act 24, Class 2, 2003, paragraph 5, a minister shall not normally be nominated to serve on any Assembly Board or Committee during the first three years of his ministry. This restriction shall also apply to ministers newly admitted to the Free Church from other denominations.

5. That a person serving a full term on any Committee or Board specified in this Act shall not be eligible for nomination to any Committee or Board until at least one year has elapsed from the date at which the full term of appointment ended.

6. That uninterrupted absence from meetings by any member of a Committee or Board during the period from the General Assembly to 31st December in any calendar year, without good reason given by him and sustained by the relevant Committee or Board, shall be considered a resignation of his membership of that Committee or Board, who shall inform the Assembly Clerks' Office accordingly before 31st January of the ensuing year. Upon notification the Assembly Clerks' Office shall proceed to appoint a replacement who shall serve until the ensuing General Assembly at which the Clerks shall report on the same.

7. That the Assembly Clerks' Office shall consider in October annually impending vacancies to Committees and Boards due at the ensuing General Assembly. After this meeting, and not later than 31st October, the Assembly Clerk shall notify Presbyteries, indicating the vacancies which require nomination from within their bounds, as well as the skills required for

these positions and inviting them to submit names of suitably qualified personnel by 31st December. Not later than 15th March the Assembly Clerks' Office shall formulate its Report to the ensuing General Assembly giving due consideration to these submissions and any other matters affecting Committee and Board appointments.

8. That with the exception of the Board of Trustees and the Psalmody & Praise Committee, each Committee and Board referred to in 1-6 above shall hold three statutory meetings per annum, with the liberty to arrange additional meetings as required.
9. That in the selection of names of Ministers and Elders to form any Special Committee, which is to report to a subsequent Assembly, the Assembly shall not be restricted to its own members.
10. That when the appointment of a Special Committee has been resolved on, the Committee shall not be nominated till the following day, except in cases the urgency of which does not admit of a day's delay.
11. That no Committee shall sit while the Moderator is in the Chair at any session of the Assembly's meeting.

APPENDIX ONE

Act 33, Class 2, 2010 - Act anent Use of Modern Technology in Conducting Church Business

The General Assembly, recognising the advantages to be obtained from the use of modern technology in conducting the business of Church courts, committees and boards hereby enact as follows:

1. Technology such as video conferencing may only be used for the conduct of meetings where all members of the court, committee or board have reasonably ready access to such facilities.
2. The minutes of a meeting conducted by video or telephone conferencing shall indicate the location of the meeting as being that of the chairman or convener and should also note that some members were present by way of video or telephone link.
3. The sederunt of a meeting conducted by video or telephone conferencing shall be read out by the secretary or clerk once all participants have joined the meeting.
4. It is preferable that matters requiring a vote to be taken be held over until a subsequent face to face meeting. If a vote needs to be taken on a particular matter, at the instruction of the chairman or convener, the secretary or clerk shall record the vote of each member in turn and after totalling the votes, advise the board or committee accordingly and record in the minute as normal.
5. All members of courts, committees or boards must ensure that normal rules governing confidentiality are adhered to in the conduct of meetings held by telephone or video conferencing.
6. Any decisions relating to the business of a court, committee or board, taken outside of a formal meeting (for example, decisions taken following email consultation) must be recorded formally in the minute of the next meeting.