

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE



FREE CHURCH *of* SCOTLAND

CONVENED AT EDINBURGH, MAY 2021

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THAT ASSEMBLY

AND THE

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMISSION

OF THE 2020 ASSEMBLY

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

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FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND – 2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND HELD AT EDINBURGH ON MONDAY 17TH MAY 2021

1. **Assembly Constituted.** By means of the Zoom audio-visual technology on 17th May 2021, on which day the Ministers and Elders, Commissioners from Presbyteries appointed to meet this day, were convened, and after devotions and sermon preached from Acts 8: 1-8; 26-40 on Philip the Evangelist, by Rev. Donald G. Macdonald, Moderator of the 2020 General Assembly, the General Assembly was duly constituted.

2. **Election of Moderator.** The General Assembly then proceeded to elect a Moderator, when it was moved, seconded and agreed that the Assembly appoint Rev. Neil MacMillan, Cornerstone Church, Edinburgh to be their Moderator. Intimation was then made to Mr MacMillan, who, having been introduced and welcomed, took the Chair, thanked the Assembly and thanked the retiring Moderator.

3. **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.

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

(A) ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS

1. The General Assembly, noting the ongoing Scottish Government COVID-19 restrictions on travel and public gatherings, declare that the Assembly shall convene virtually using Zoom video-technology hosted in the Assembly Hall, St Columba's Free Church, Edinburgh, according to the terms of Act 33, Class 2, 2010, and Act 5, Class 2, 2020.

2. 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 according to the process outlined in Act 2, Class 2, 2020 for asking the Questions and signing the Formula on accepting an application to the ministry of the Free Church of Scotland.

3. The General Assembly declare that voting on amendments and addenda to Reports, Overtures and Petitions which come before the Assembly shall be undertaken, in the first place, using the Zoom polling function, and, when the voting results show a ten percent or less majority, that an online survey software be used to verify the validity of votes and the identity of all participants.

(B) GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROGRAMME

1. The General Assembly approve the draft Assembly programme distributed with Assembly papers showing the General Assembly meeting as appointed on Monday 17th May 2021 at 6.00pm and with a total of five Sessions, and with the business expected to be completed by 5.00pm on Wednesday 19th May 2021.

2. The General Assembly declare that the Supplementary Report of the Board of Ministry, containing applications for the ministry of the Free Church of Scotland, shall be taken up by the Assembly in private session, with the Assembly moving into open session for asking the Questions and signing the Formula.

3. The General Assembly declare that when the Report of the March 2021 Commission of Assembly appointed to report on matters relating to a decision of the Northern Presbytery on Tuesday 16th February, that only the following documents are made available to Commissioners due to the personal nature of one of the appendices: The Petition in the name of Mr Iain R. Morrison with Appendix 1-8 and 10 only; the papers before the Northern Presbytery at its meeting held on Tuesday 16th February 2021; the Dissent and Complaint with Reasons; and the Presbytery Responses to Reasons.

4. The General Assembly declare that when the said report of the March 2021 Commission of Assembly is taken up by the Assembly the whole matter is processed during private session. They approve of the process of sharing the above-listed documents with Commissioners and interested parties digitally and securely before the matter is taken up by the Assembly.

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(C) OVERTURES AND PETITIONS

1. The General Assembly note receipt of the Overture of the Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross regarding the establishment of a Public Engagement Group. They declare that the Overture be taken up by the Assembly as an amendment to Section E 10-11 of the Board of Trustees Proposed Deliverance.
2. The General Assembly note the submission of an Overture from Rev. Ian Watson and others requesting that the Assembly form a Committee to consider how the Church should interpret and apply the Establishment Principle in the 21st century and advise the Church accordingly. They declare that the Overture be taken up by the Assembly as a separate item in the Assembly Programme.
3. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth regarding Rev. Colin Ross and grants its crave. They direct that Mr Ross's name be retained on the Roll of Probationers for another three-year period according to the provisions of Acts 8, Class 2, 2019.
4. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Northern Presbytery regarding Rev. William Paterson and grant its crave. They direct that Mr Paterson's name be retained on the Roll of Probationers for another three-year period according to the provisions of Acts 8, Class 2, 2019.

(D) GENERAL ASSEMBLY DOCUMENTS

1. The General Assembly record the Roll of the Assembly as distributed with Assembly papers. They approve of the Business Committee's decision to receive late additions to the list of Commissioners appointed by Presbyteries up until 30th April 2021. They declare that such late additions be included on the Roll of Assembly on receipt of the appropriate extract of the proceedings of the Presbytery outlined in Act 8, 1853, as amended by Act 9, 1863.
2. The General Assembly approve and adopt the Standing Orders, distributed with Assembly papers, with the changes to the following paragraphs: Section E.1.1 – Assembly meetings; Section E.5.3 – length of speeches; Section E.10.3 – voting; Section E.15 – examination of records; Section E.19 – minutes of the General Assembly.
3. The General Assembly approve the revised Guidelines for Commissioners distributed with Assembly papers.

(E) EXAMINATION OF RECORDS

1. The General Assembly note that the Assembly Clerks have not been able to carry out the examination of records as instructed by the Assembly in Act 2, Class 2, 2020, Paragraph 6, due to the ongoing Scottish Government COVID-19 restrictions on in-person meetings. They also note that it is not possible for committees to meet for the examination of records because of the said restrictions.
2. The General Assembly instruct all Presbyteries to submit their records for ecclesiastical years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 to the Assembly Clerks' Office for examination as soon as in-person meetings are possible and on receipt of a request of the Assembly Clerk. They instruct the Assembly Clerks to report to the Commission of Assembly or the General Assembly as soon as possible after the examination has been completed.
3. The General Assembly instruct all Boards and Committees to submit their records for ecclesiastical years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 electronically, in MS Word format, to the Assembly Clerks' Office by Friday 12th June 2021. They instruct the Assembly Clerks to examine such records and to report on the examination to the October 2021 Commission of Assembly.
4. The General Assembly authorise the Assembly Clerk, on records being attested as correct, to issue a statement of attestation in the form of an extract of the proceedings of the General Assembly or its Commissions to Presbytery Clerks and the Clerks of Boards and Committees. They instruct all Clerks to insert the statement of attestation in their permanent records at the first available opportunity after receipt of the same from the Assembly Clerk.

(F) MISCELLANEOUS

1. The General Assembly note that the work of a committee to prepare a Loyal and Dutiful Address to Her Majesty the Queen is not possible due to the current restrictions on in-person meetings. They thank Rev. Donald G. Macdonald, Moderator of the 2020 General Assembly, and Rev. Neil MacMillan, Moderator Designate of the 2021 General Assembly, for preparing a draft Loyal and Dutiful Address for the 2021 General Assembly. They receive and adopt the draft Loyal and Dutiful Address on the recommendation of the Business Committee, and they declare that it shall be read at a suitable time in the Assembly programme before being forwarded to Her Majesty the Queen.

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2. The General Assembly note that Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, has been appointed as the Queen’s Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for 2021. They note with regret that it will not be possible for the Lord High Commissioner to address the Assembly in person. They welcome the opportunity to receive a letter from the Lord High Commissioner addressed to the Moderator and declare that it should be read to the Assembly at a suitable time in the programme.

3. The General Assembly approve of the alternative arrangements for the preparation of a Report on Deceased Ministers and Elders. They thank the Assembly Clerks for preparing a report on this item. They also thank Presbytery Clerks for the submission of the relevant details for the Report and associated tributes in the case of deceased Ministers. They declare that Presbytery representatives shall read tributes to Ministers who have passed away within their bounds when the Report is taken up by the Assembly.

4. The General Assembly grant the following, who are not Commissioners, permission to speak at the General Assembly at the appropriate time: Rev. David Meredith, Rev. Dr Malcolm Maclean, Principal Iver Martin, Rev. Ivor MacDonald. Rev. Paul Clarke, Mr Donald Forsyth, Mrs Sarah Johnson and Mrs Mairi MacPherson.

4. **Assembly Clerks’ Office.** The General Assembly called for the Report of the Assembly Clerks’ Office, which was presented 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 note the difficulties encountered in seeking to complete remits from the 2019 and 2020 General Assemblies due to COVID-19 restrictions. They grant a further extension of the 2019 General Assembly remit regarding draft proposals for a new Act of Assembly to replace Act 10, Class 2, 2006 regarding the Appointment and Employment of Presbytery Workers in conjunction with the Mission Board and the Board of Trustees and to report to the 2021 General Assembly. They also grant an extension on the 2020 General Assembly remit 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 staffing changes. They instruct the Assembly Clerks’ Office to report on both of the aforesaid remits to the 2022 General Assembly.

2. The General Assembly direct that all Boards and Committees submit their records to the Assembly Clerks’ Office in electronic format not later than Friday 12th June 2021 for examinations. They further direct that all Presbytery records are submitted to the Assembly Clerks’ Office for examination as soon as the Scottish Government COVID-19 restrictions allow in-person meetings and at the request of the Principal Clerk. They instruct the Assembly Clerks’ Office to report on the examination to the October 2021 Commission of Assembly.

3. The General Assembly suspend the requirements of Assembly Standing Orders Section E.17.1 regarding the appointment of a Committee to report on deceased Ministers and Elders. They thank the Assembly Clerks’ Office for the alternative arrangements for the work of this Committee. They note with sadness the names of the Ministers and Elders who have passed away since the 2019 General Assembly, listed in Appendix Two. They instruct that the Report, including the tributes to deceased Ministers, be engrossed in the records of the Assembly as follows:

Deceased Elders

Presbytery	Name	Congregation
<i>Edinburgh & Perth</i>	Mr Ian Macdonald	Bon-Accord, Aberdeen
	Mr Kenneth Maciver	Bon-Accord, Aberdeen
	Mr William Anderson	Buccleuch & Greyfriars, Edinburgh
	Mr Donald Matheson	Falkirk
<i>Glasgow & Argyll</i>	Mr John Macleod	East Kilbride
<i>Inverness, Lochaber & Ross</i>	Mr Donnie Macrae	Dingwall & Strathpeffer
	Mr Malcolm Fraser	Dingwall & Strathpeffer
	Dr Gordon Fraser	Free North, Inverness
	Dr Alastair Morrison	Free North, Inverness
	Mr Ian MacIennan	Kiltearn
	Mr Martin Cameron	Ferintosh and Resolis
	Mr Hector Grigor	Knockbain
<i>Northern</i>		

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<i>Skye & Wester Ross</i>	Mr Charles Baptie	Portree & Bracadale
	Mr Ronald Jackson	Duirinish
	Mr Ian R. Macleod	Trotternish
<i>Western Isles</i>	Mr William Macleod	Back
	Mr Neil Murray	Back
	Mr Alexander Stewart	Back
	Mr Alan Duncan Mackinnon	Barvas
	Mr John M. Mackay	Barvas
	Mr Roderick Mackenzie	Garrabost
	Mr Norman MacMillan	Garrabost
	Mr Malcolm J. Mackay	High Free Church
	Mr William Morrison	High Free Church
	Mr Murdo Mackenzie	Kinloch
	Mr Alexander Crichton	Stornoway
<i>North America</i>	Mr Alexander D. Macdonald	Stornoway

Deceased Ministers

Presbytery	Names	Date
<i>Edinburgh & Perth</i>		
<i>Glasgow & Argyll</i>	Rev. Dr David E.C. Ford	16th February 2020
<i>Inverness, Lochaber & Ross</i>		
<i>Northern</i>		
<i>Skye & Wester Ross</i>	Rev. John H. Maclean	12th February 2020
<i>Western Isles</i>	Rev. Robert Sinclair	1st July 2019
<i>North America</i>		

Tribute - Rev. Dr David E.C. Ford

We are saddened to report the death of our brother and friend, David Ford, who passed into glory on Sunday night, 16th February 2020, after suffering a stroke during the previous week.

David will be sorely missed by everyone who had the privilege of knowing him, but especially by his family. David was a loving husband, father, father-in-law and grandfather. We extend our deep sympathy and condolences to his wife Marianna, and his children David, Elizabeth, Rebecca, John and Matthew, and their families. We pray that each of them may know the comfort and presence of the Lord in their sadness.

David was a man who loved his Lord and Saviour and loved to tell others of the God of all grace, which he did in a lifetime of ministry and preaching in an impressively wide range of locations and contexts.

His first pastoral charge was in the remote town of Celendín, high in the Peruvian Andes, where he ministered with Olwen, his first wife who pre-deceased him, for several years, along with the growing family. In this challenging environment, they were a wonderful example of a loving Christian home, open to all, and caring for anyone needing help and counsel. In due time, they returned to Scotland where David was called to minister in Coatbridge Free Church, where he was much loved by the congregation. But his love for Latin America was still evident, making frequent short teaching trips to Lima, Moyobamba and Medellín.

His gifts in lecturing were widely respected, leading to his taking up a full-time post in the seminary in Medellín, Colombia, and establishing an online theological resource in Spanish, Recursos Teológicos, making its material available to all.

David's servant heart and desire to serve his Lord continued when he returned to Scotland, assisting as Interim-Moderator where needed, Clerk to the Board of Ministry, part-time Lecturer in Edinburgh Theological Seminary and in many other ways, many of them known only to his Master.

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Now his work on earth is done, and he is enjoying being with the One he loves most, the Lord Jesus Christ. We miss him but are comforted in our sorrow by our sure and certain hope in the gospel.

Tribute – Rev. John H. Maclean

It was with an enormous sense of sadness that we learned of the passing of Rev. John H. Maclean on 12th February 2020. There are not the words to express how much he was loved and how much he will be missed. He was a loving husband to Morag, his trusted helpmeet and partner in the work of the Gospel, a devoted father and best friend to his son Martin, and a father-in-law who welcomed with open arms into the family his daughter-in-law, Shivonne. We continue to pray that they will know the Lord, the God of all grace, comforting and carrying them through their grief.

John was a man who loved people and loved preaching for he was a man who, above all things, loved his Saviour. His enthusiasm for preaching the gospel was unmatched. Even when, due to ill health, he was no longer able to preach, he was still preparing sermons. From the age of seventeen he proclaimed the Gospel faithfully and powerfully, always believing it was the power of God to salvation for those who would believe. His ministry in Lairg and in Trotternish was owned and blessed by God and he was used by Him in the much wider Church to bring many to Christ. John's optimism was unbridled and his willingness to serve the Church in any way he could made him that rare individual who actually enjoyed Presbyteries and Committees! His gravitas and wise counsel in the Presbytery of Skye and Wester Ross provided stability during difficult times, and his friendship and encouragement to colleagues over the years were invaluable. He truly was a good and faithful servant. But it was time for him to enter more fully into the joy of his Lord. He is now before the throne of God and will serve Him night and day in his temple, and the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be his Shepherd and lead him to springs of living water, and God will wipe every tear from his eyes. We are comforted by that Gospel hope, but we still feel the pain of the parting and miss him immensely.

Tribute – Rev. Robert Sinclair

Robert (Bob) Malcolm Sinclair was born in Gaya, India on 25th April 1941. When Bob was 11, the family moved to England and he completed his secondary education in Exeter. In 1957, Bob joined the RAF as an apprentice radio technician and in 1961 he was posted to the RAF station at Aird, Uig, Isle of Lewis. In the providence of God, Lewis was to become home. Quite soon after his arrival, he met Annie Mary Macleod, and they were married in Stornoway Free Church in September 1964, a marriage which lasted for 55 happy years. The first three years of their married life were spent in Germany during which Allison and Robert were born. This was followed with a posting to RAF Kinloss in 1968 and in 1969 they were posted back to Aird, Uig. They set up home in Stornoway and in 1971 their third child, Monica, was born. Monica passed away in 2015.

Bob was deeply affected by Annie Mary's conversion and in due time he too came to embrace the Saviour and lived out the rest of his life consistently honouring and serving Him. Shortly after his conversion, he felt the Lord was calling him into the Christian ministry. After completing his studies at the Free Church College, Edinburgh, he was ordained and inducted to the pastoral charge of Dumbarton Free Church where he and Annie Mary served the Lord faithfully and fruitfully for over 17 years. During his time there he also served as Clerk of the Glasgow Presbytery. He was also a dutiful Interim Moderator for the vacant Free Church congregations of Arran, St Vincent Street, East Kilbride and Ayr.

As a preacher, Bob conveyed the great themes of the gospel with Christ-centred reverence and with a genuine zeal to see all those who were still strangers to God's grace embracing Him as their Saviour. Although he retired from the pastoral charge of Dumbarton Free Church, he never retired from being a pastor. On their return to Lewis in 2009, their home at Nicol Crescent was a particularly warm and welcoming one, as is fondly remembered by their many friends. From there, Bob continued a quiet but effective ministry of supporting, comforting, counselling and encouraging all those he came into contact with.

After being granted a seat on the Western Isles Presbytery, Bob served with great acceptance as Interim Moderator of the Lochs congregation, and of the Stornoway Free Church congregation. In addition, he regularly provided a much-appreciated pulpit supply to the vacant congregations throughout the Western Isles. In 2012 he was elected to serve as an Elder on the Kirk Session of Stornoway Free Church where he applied himself with unfailing loyalty.

One of Bob's great concerns was for the continuance of a robust, challenging and Bible-focused pulpit ministry and he frequently provided support, wisdom and encouragement to his younger colleagues in the ministry. He loved preaching

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and did so up to the close of 2018, when his health issues became more apparent, forcing him to decline invitations to do so.

We extend our sincere condolences to his widow Annie Mary, his daughter Allison and her husband John, his son Robert and his wife Marina, and to his grandchildren Michelle, James, Josh and Jodie, as well as to his remaining brother Peter and his wife Margaret. We pray that God will comfort and strengthen them all.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Philippians 1.2

(B) GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. The General Assembly note that all Provincial Synods have completed the re-arrangements of funds held in their name according to the requirements of Act 1, Class 1, 2020. They declare that Provincial Synods are now dissolved and instruct that the terms of the said Act be fully implemented. They direct that all Provincial Synod records be deposited in the Central Offices in Edinburgh for safe storage with other historical records.

2. The General Assembly declare that the requirement of Act 8, 1853 as amended by Act 9, 1863 that Kirk Session that *bona fide* Certificates be issued by Kirk Session for Ruling Elders appointed as Commissioners to the General Assembly be discontinued. They instruct the Assembly Clerks to ensure that a *bona fide* Certificate be included in the Form of Commissions for Presbyteries. They amend Act 8, 1853, as amended by Act 9, 1863, to read as follows:

The General Assembly, on the Report of their Committee appointed to collect, revise, and classify, the existing Standing Orders, and to suggest such other Orders as might appear to be necessary, did, and hereby do, ORDER:

I. As to COMMISSIONS to General Assembly

1. That all Commissions transmitted to the Clerks of Assembly, shall be revised by them, in so far as regards the regularity of said Commissions in point of form; and that the Clerks shall prepare and submit a Report on the subject to the Committee appointed by the Assembly for the revising of Commissions.
2. That the Clerks of Assembly shall furnish all Presbytery Clerks with printed copies of the form of Commission to Representatives hitherto in use and hereto appended.

Commission to Representatives

At the day of one thousand eight hundred and years. The which day the Free Church Presbytery of being convened, in order to elect their Representatives to the ensuing Assembly, pursuant to a resolution entered their minutes on the day of did, and hereby do, nominate and appoint:

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Congregation</i>
Rev.	Minister at
Rev.	Minister at
Rev.	Minister at
Rev.	Minister at

With (*with their names given at length and including the Kirk Session of which they are members*)

<i>Ruling Elder</i>	<i>Congregation of</i>

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their Commissioners to the next General Assembly of the Free Church Scotland, indicted to meet at Edinburgh the day of May next to come when and where it shall happen to sit, willing them to repair thereto, and to attend all the diets of the same, and there to consult, vote, and determine in all matters that come before them, to the glory of God and the good of His Church, according to the Word of God, the Confession of Faith, and agreeable to the constitution of this Church, as they will be answerable ; and that they report their diligence therein at their return therefrom.

And the said Presbytery do hereby testify and declare, that all the Ministers above named have signed the Formula, and further, that the said Ruling Elders are *bona fide* acting Elders of their Congregation and have signed the Formula, are of unblemished character, circumspect in their walk, regular in giving attendance on the ordinances of Divine Institution and behave in other respects agreeable to their office. All which the Presbytery have hereby attested on proper information.

Attested by

..... Moderator

..... Clerk

AFTER-ELECTION OF A MINISTER

At the day of one thousand eight hundred and years. The which day the Free Church Presbytery of being convened, and *here narrate the occasion of the new election*) did, and hereby do, nominate and appoint in place, their Commissioner to the next General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland; and do hereby testify and declare, that signed the Formula.; which the Presbytery hereby attest upon proper information.

Attested by

..... Moderator

..... Clerk

AFTER-ELECTION OF AN ELDER

At the day of one thousand eight hundred and years. The which day the Free Church Presbytery of being convened, and (*here narrate the occasion of the new election*) did, and hereby do, nominate and appoint in place, their Commissioner to the next General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland; and do hereby testify and declare, that he is in all respects qualified in the same manner as their Commissioner, in whose room he is chosen; which the Presbytery hereby attest upon proper information.

Attested by

..... Moderator

..... Clerk

3. The General Assembly repeal Act 31, Class 2, 1976 – Act anent Certificates for Elder Commissioners, and Act 6, Class 2, 2009 – Act anent Elders' Certificates (Presbytery Clerks to monitor submission).

(C) NOMINATIONS

1. The General Assembly note that Rev. Ivor Macdonald completes his second four-year term on the Board of Ministry at this Assembly. They thank Mr Macdonald for his contribution to the work of the Board and for his services as the Board's Vice-Chairman.

2. The General Assembly note the resignations of Rev. Kenneth J. Macleod, Rev. Paul Clarke and Mr James Fraser from the Board of Trustees. They thank Mr Macleod, Mr Clarke and especially Mr Fraser for his unstinting and faithful service to the Church as a member and as Chairman of the Board.

3. The General Assembly note Rev. Thomas Davis's desire not to be re-appointed to the ETS Board. They thank Mr Davis for his services on the Board and especially his contribution as Fundraising Coordinator.

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4. The General Assembly note Rev. Dr Robert Akroyd and Dr John Morrison’s desire not to be re-appointed to the Mission Board. They thank Dr Akroyd for his service and leadership of the Board as its Chairman. They also thank Dr Morrison for his services to the Church as a member of the Board and of its predecessor, the Home Mission Board.

5. 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	2	1
	Rev. Thomas Davis	EP	1	1
	Rev. Colin L. Macleod	SWR	2	1
	1 member appointed by Senate			
	Mr Murdo Murray	WI	4	2
	Mr Michael W. J. Townsend	WI	4	2
	Mr Clive Bailey	SWR	2	2
	Mr Robert Coke	EP	1	1
	ETS Principal <i>ex officio</i>			
Chairman:	Rev. Paul Clarke			
Clerk:	Mr Charles Anderson			

Board of Trustees			Year	Term
	Mr Donald Forsyth	ILR	4	1
	Mr Gordon Macleod	WI	1	1
	Mr Alan Crooks	GA	1	1
	Mr Neil Longwe	GA	3	1
	Mr Mark Robinson	N	3	1
	Rev. Neil MacMillan	EP	1	1
	Rev. David C. Meredith	EP	4	2
	Rev. Alasdair M. Macleod	ILR	1	1
	Rev. Iver Martin	EP	1	1
	Rev. Calum Iain Macleod	ILR	2	2
	Mr Alastair Oliver	EP	2	2
	Mr Donald Macleod (Stornoway)	WI	3	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		3	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. Andrew Longwe		1	1
	Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean	ILR	4	2
	Rev. Dr Fergus A. J. Macdonald	EP	4	2

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	Mr William Mackenzie	N	2	1
	Mr Ross S. Finlay	LIR	2	1
Chairman:	Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean			
Clerk:	Seminary Secretary			

Mission Board		Year	Term	
	Rev. Jeremy Ross	EP	2	1
	Rev. Dr Alastair Wilson	EP	1	1
	Rev. Iain MacAskill	GA	3	2
	Rev. David Macleod	WI	1	2
	Rev. Chris Davidson	ILR	3	1
	Rev. Donald G. Macdonald	SWR	3	1
	Dr Andrew Maciver	EP	3	1
	Mr Duncan MacPherson	WI	1	1
Chairman:	Rev. David Macleod			
Secretary	Mission Coordinator			

Psalmody & Praise Committee		Year	Term	
	Rev. Iver Martin	EP	4	2
	Rev. Neil L. Macdonald	SWR	3	1
	Mr Charles Douglas	EP	1	1
	Rev. Ruairidh Maclean	GA	3	2
	Mr Kenneth Macdonald	WI	1	2
	Mr Stewart Clark	SWR	1	1
Convener:	Rev.			
Clerk:	Mr Charles Douglas			

The General Assembly reappoint the Judicial Commission as follows:

Presbytery		Year	Term
Edinburgh & Perth	Rev. David C. Meredith	2	3
	Rev. Neil MacMillan	4	1
	Mr John MacRae	2	3
	Mr Neil Campbell	4	1
Glasgow & Argyll	Rev. Iain MacAskill	2	3
	Rev. Ian M. Watson	4	1
	Mr Evan MacDonald	2	3
	Mr Rod Morrison	4	1
Inverness, Lochaber & Ross	Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean	4	1
	Rev. Angus MacRae	2	3
	Mr Andrew Murchison	2	3
	Mr John Macaulay	4	1
Northern	Rev. Howard Stone	4	1
	Rev. Gordon Mair	4	1
	Mr Bill Ferrier	2	1
	Mr John Skinner	4	1
Skye & Wester Ross	Rev. Marcos Florit	4	1
	Rev. Roddie Rankin	2	1
	Mr Ian Macdonald	4	1
	Mr Stewart Clarke	2	1
Western Isles	Rev. Andrew Coghill	2	1
	Rev. Ewen Matheson	3	1
	Mr Donald Macleod (Shawbost)	4	1
	Mr Murdo Murray (Stornoway)	2	3
Chairman:	Mr Neil Campbell		
Clerk:	Principal Clerk		

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3. **Overture Establishment Principle.** The General Assembly then called for the Overture on the Establishment Principle presented by Rev. Ian Watson on the following terms:

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

The General Assembly receive the Overture in the name of Rev. Ian Watson and others and grant its crave. They form a Committee to consider how the Church should interpret and apply the Establishment Principle in the 21st century. They declare that the Committee shall have six members and shall have the power to appoint consultants and co-opt members as required to fulfil its remit. They instruct the Committee to report their findings to the 2022 General Assembly.

3.2. **Appointments.** Commissioners were advised that the Committee would be appointed at the appropriate time in Session Five of the Assembly and that they should submit nominations for membership to the Assembly Clerk.

4. **Announcements.** The Principal Clerk called for amendments/addenda to the Mission Board Report. The Clerk read out Amendments/Addenda to hand at this stage.

5. **Adjournment.** The General Assembly then adjourned to meet again at 9.00am on Tuesday 18th May 2021 whereof public intimation having been given, the Session was closed with prayer.

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND – 2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. **Constitute.** The General Assembly did again convene and was constituted with devotional exercises.
2. **Moderator's Address:** The Moderator then addressed the Assembly on the theme, "Mission in 21st Century Scotland." The Principal Clerk expressed thanks to Mr MacMillan for his timely and encouraging address.
3. **Minutes of 1st Session.** The Minutes of this Session were adjusted and approved.
4. **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. Mrs Sarah Johnson, Mrs Màiri Macpherson, Mission Coordinators, and Rev. David Meredith, Mission Director, also addressed the Assembly.
- 4.1 **First Motion.** It was moved and seconded that:

(A) GENERAL

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Mission Board and thank all members of the Board especially the Chairman, Rev. Dr Robert J. Akroyd, Rev. David Macleod, Vice-Chairman, Rev. David Meredith, Mission Director, Mrs Sarah Johnson and Mrs Màiri MacPherson, Mission Coordinators.
2. The General Assembly thank the members and adherents of the Church who by their prayerful interest, financial contributions and ongoing interest support and encourage the sharing of the Gospel in Scotland and overseas.
3. The General Assembly thank the Chief Executive Officer, the Finance Manager, Compliance Officer and members of the Offices staff for their contributions to the work of the Board.
4. The General Assembly declare the post of Mission Director to be a permanent appointment with the appointment to be reviewed every five years. They re-appoint Rev. David Meredith as Mission Director and thank him for his services to the Church since his first appointment.
5. The General Assembly acknowledge with gratitude to God the invaluable and inspiring part played by Mission Support Groups and Women for Mission in raising funds and fostering an awareness of mission activity.
6. The General Assembly thank the Enspire Committee for their ongoing commitment to supporting and providing an opportunity for fellowship among ministers' wives.
7. The General Assembly thank Mrs Mairi MacDonald, Kilmuir, Isle of Skye, for compiling the monthly Mission Prayer Notes on behalf of the Board and commend her to the prayers of the Church.
8. The General Assembly thank congregations for their willingness to allow their Ministers to serve on the Mission Board.
9. The General Assembly thank Mission Board consultants, Miss Ali MacDonald, Mrs Janet Murchison, Mrs Sarah Lytle, and Rev. Malcolm Macleod, for their commitment to serve the work of mission in this way.
10. The General Assembly thank Rev. Dr Robert J. Akroyd for his committed work as Chairman of the Board during his period of service.
11. The General Assembly thank the Conveners of the Mission Board Sub-Committees and those who serve on these Sub-Committees for serving the work of mission in this way.
12. The General Assembly thank the Communications Officer and Rev. David Meredith, Mission Director, for their work on the Generation podcast.
13. The General Assembly thank the Mission Board for providing prayer resources for use in the denomination throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

(B) GENERAL MINISTRY

1. The General Assembly give thanks for the diligent work undertaken in Locally Subsidised Charges and Alternative Ministerial Arrangement Charges.

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND – 2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2. The General Assembly note the new settled ministry in South Uist and Benbecula and thank the Mission Board for its financial commitment to the ministry for the first three years. The Assembly note the further two-year financial commitment of the Mission Board and the Western Isles Presbytery to the ministry in South Uist and Benbecula and thank them for this commitment. They extend the first three-term of Rev. Thomas Penman's appointment by two years due to the COVID-19 restrictions on revitalising ministry in the congregation with the appointment to be reviewed in October 2024.
3. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll regarding the congregation of Campbeltown and, noting the recommendation of the Mission Board, grant its crave. They grant permission to the congregation of Campbeltown to call a Minister on the restricted terms of a five-year reviewable appointment in accordance with the terms of Act 1, Class 1, 2018 anent the Sustentation Fund, Paragraph 3.4.
4. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and Perth regarding the appointment of an Assistant Minister to the congregation of St Columba's and, noting the recommendation of the Mission Board, grant its crave. They grant permission to the congregation of St Columba's to appoint a Minister in accordance with the terms of Act 18, Class 2, 2013, anent Assistantships, such permission to lapse at the General Assembly of 2023.
5. The General Assembly receive the Petition of the Presbytery of the Western Isles regarding the appointment of an Assistant Minister to the congregation of Stornoway and, noting the recommendation of the Mission Board, grant its crave. They grant permission to the congregation of Stornoway to appoint a Minister in accordance with the terms of Act 18, Class 2, 2013, anent Assistantships, such permission to lapse at the General Assembly of 2023.

(C) CHURCH PLANTING

1. The General Assembly give thanks for the diligent work undertaken in Church Planting Charges.
2. The General Assembly note the commencement of the role of Church Planting Director, which has been filled by Rev. Neil MacMillan. The General Assembly thank the Board of Trustees for their financial contribution to this role and commit Mr MacMillan to the prayers of the Church as he pursues the vision of planting 30 churches by 2030.
3. The General Assembly note the progress made in fulfilling the goal of planting 30 churches in Scotland by 2030, including plans for assessment, training, coaching and funding in order to create a pipeline of Church Planters. The General Assembly thank City to City Europe for their partnership and encouragement in this effort. The General Assembly note the need for fundraising in order to fulfil this vision and commit it to the prayers of the Church.
4. The General Assembly give thanks for the Gospel generosity expressed by the UK Partnership towards Church Planting in Scotland.
5. The General Assembly note the progress made in securing a successor to the ministry in Govan G51. The General Assembly note the urgent need to maintain this ministry and they empower the 2021 October Commission of Assembly to receive a report from the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll through the Mission Board regarding this matter.
6. 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 Mr MacMillan's 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.

(D) CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

1. The General Assembly give thanks for the diligent work undertaken by the congregations involved in the Church Development Track.
2. The General Assembly thank those who became involved in Generation 19.
3. The General Assembly thank the Mission Board for carrying out the Annual Health Check and for the recent development of the Congregation Survey. They also thank Congregations for taking part in the Annual Health Check and Congregational Survey and commend future Congregational Surveys to the Church.
4. The General Assembly commend the Conference addressing rural ministry, *In a Big Country*, which has been rescheduled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to the Congregations and to the prayers of the Church.

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND – 2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

5. The General Assembly note the remit given to the Mission Board by the 2019 General Assembly to demonstrate how the Church will secure the reliable provision of ministry personnel for the Church's rural congregations. They recognise the large scale and scope of this remit, and the impracticality of fulfilling this remit within a year. They instruct the Mission Board to maintain rural ministry as one of its ongoing priorities and to report to the Assembly annually on the progress made in the area of rural ministry in the Church.

(E) CHURCH EQUIPPING

1. The General Assembly thank Miss Kirsten Macdonald for her work. They note the change of the title of the role from Camps Administrator to Camps Coordinator. They commend Miss Macdonald to the prayers of the Church.

2. The General Assembly thank Mr Donald Macleod, for his work as Camps Supervisor. They commend Mr Macleod to the prayers of the Church.

3. The General Assembly thank all leaders, cooks and others who have contributed to the success of the Camps Programme in 2019 and urge Congregations to be active in support of this work in prayer.

4. The General Assembly thank Deacons' Courts and individuals who have contributed to sponsorship for campers and leaders.

5. The General Assembly give thanks for those involved with organising and helping at the Big Free Rally.

6. The General Assembly note the cancellation of the Camps Programmes which were due to run in Summer 2020 and Summer 2021. They thank those who made this decision for their wisdom. The General Assembly commend the online event "FCYC: Connect" to the prayers of the Church.

7. The General Assembly note with thankfulness the 60th anniversary of Free Church Youth Camps and thank all those involved in Camps since its conception in 1960.

8. The General Assembly thank the Youth Conference Committees for arranging the Conference in 2020 and the online Conference in 2021. The General Assembly note the sudden cancellation of the Youth Conference in 2020 and thank the Committee for its wisdom in making this decision. They commend the new Youth Conference Committee to the prayers of the Church.

9. The General Assembly thank all teachers for their devoted service in our Sunday Schools.

10. The General Assembly welcome the report of the Leadership Bootcamp from June 2019. They thank all those who were involved in helping to lead this week. They note the cancellation of the Leadership Bootcamp which was due to run in June 2020. They also note the online sessions which took place in June 2020 and those which are due to take place in June 2021.

11. The General Assembly commend Praying for One Another to all Congregations to make use of.

12. The General Assembly thank Rev. Billy Graham for his series of daily devotionals and those involved in publicising the daily devotionals entitled *Walk with Me* and commend *Walk with Me* to individuals in the church to make use of.

13. The General Assembly commend the use of Resource Packs to all Congregations.

(F) GLOBAL MISSION

1. The General Assembly give thanks for the diligent work undertaken by those involved in Global Mission.

2. The General Assembly send greetings to all Free Church members working with mission organisations.

3. The General Assembly thank the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland for their ongoing partnership, prayerful and financial support of the overseas work of the Board.

4. The General Assembly note with their approval and thankfulness the compilation of a Memorandum of Understanding between Overseas Missionary Fellowship and the Free Church of Scotland. They also note that an official partnership is now in place between Overseas Missionary Fellowship and the Free Church of Scotland.

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND – 2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

5. The General Assembly thank the Mission Board for the completion of a Global Mission Audit and note the relevant findings.

6. The General Assembly thank the Mission Board for the production of a Global Mission Strategy. They approve the strategy as the Global Mission Strategy of the Church.

7. The General Assembly note the report and recommendation of the Mission Board regarding the review of Asian Outreach in Glasgow and the appointment of Rev. Duncan Peters. They re-appoint Mr Peters to the work of Asian Outreach for a further period of five years according to the terms of the approved Development Plan, with the work fully funded by the Mission Board, and with the work and the appointment to be reviewed at the 2026 General Assembly. They thank Mr Peters for his services to the work of Asian Outreach over the years of his appointment and they commend him to the prayers of the Church.

8. The General Assembly thank the Board for coordinating the Appeal for India and note with thankfulness the generosity of the Church in its giving towards the Appeal.

4.2 Second Motion. It was moved and seconded that the following be inserted as new Paragraph 14 in Church Equipping Section (E) of the Proposed Deliverance:

4.3 The General Assembly direct the Mission Board:

(1) to take cognisance of the progress made by a Group of Churches in Lewis convened and chaired by the Free Church Assembly Clerk.

(2) to work with other Christian churches and sympathetic organisations in order to make a suite of resources, shaped by a Christian worldview, available to schools, teachers and parents as an alternative to the materials proposed by Education Scotland.

(3) to assist parents in securing guidance as to how to approach schools and Local Authorities on this issue; and

(4) to ensure that parents understand their legal rights in terms of determining what is taught to their children and in respect of their right to withdraw their children from inappropriate sex education.

4.4 Third Motion. It was moved and seconded that the following be added as new Section (G) Finance to the Proposed Deliverance and insert the following as Paragraph 1 to Section (G):

The General Assembly thank all congregations and members of the Church for their financial commitment during 2020 during the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions imposed by the Scottish Government.

They direct that the implementation of Act 1, Class 1, 2018, Paragraph 7, which requires a review and audit of congregations who have failed to remit the Ministry Levy and the appropriate level of the Administration and Training Levy in any one year, be waived regarding 2020 congregational remittances. They instruct the Mission Board and Presbyteries to terminate any such review initiated according to the terms of the said Act. They declare that the terms of the said Paragraph be applied to congregational remittances for 2021 and subsequent years.

4.5 The Finding. With permission of the Assembly, the Chairman accepted the Second Motion and the Third Motion, and the following was the finding of the Assembly:

(A) GENERAL

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Mission Board and thank all members of the Board especially the Chairman, Rev. Dr Robert J. Akroyd, Rev. David Macleod, Vice-Chairman, Rev. David Meredith, Mission Director, Mrs Sarah Johnson and Mrs Màiri MacPherson, Mission Coordinators.

2. The General Assembly thank the members and adherents of the Church who by their prayerful interest, financial contributions and ongoing interest support and encourage the sharing of the Gospel in Scotland and overseas.

3. The General Assembly thank the Chief Executive Officer, the Finance Manager, Compliance Officer and members of the Offices staff for their contributions to the work of the Board.

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND – 2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

4. The General Assembly declare the post of Mission Director to be a permanent appointment with the appointment to be reviewed every five years. They re-appoint Rev. David Meredith as Mission Director and they thank him for his services to the Church since his first appointment.
5. The General Assembly acknowledge with gratitude to God the invaluable and inspiring part played by Mission Support Groups and Women for Mission in raising funds and fostering an awareness of mission activity.
6. The General Assembly thank the Enspire Committee for their ongoing commitment to supporting and providing an opportunity for fellowship among ministers' wives.
7. The General Assembly thank Mrs Mairi MacDonald, Kilmuir, Isle of Skye, for compiling the monthly Mission Prayer Notes on behalf of the Board and commend her to the prayers of the Church.
8. The General Assembly thank congregations for their willingness to allow their Ministers to serve on the Mission Board.
9. The General Assembly thank Mission Board consultants, Miss Ali MacDonald, Mrs Janet Murchison, Mrs Sarah Lytle, and Rev. Malcolm Macleod, for their commitment to serve the work of mission in this way.
10. The General Assembly thank Rev. Dr Robert J. Akroyd for his committed work as Chairman of the Board during his period of service.
11. The General Assembly thank the Conveners of the Mission Board Sub-Committees and those who serve on these Sub-Committees for serving the work of mission in this way.
12. The General Assembly thank the Communications Officer and Rev. David Meredith, Mission Director, for their work on the Generation podcast.
13. The General Assembly thank the Mission Board for providing prayer resources for use in the denomination throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

(B) GENERAL MINISTRY

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FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND – 2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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4. The General Assembly thank Deacons' Courts and individuals who have contributed to sponsorship for campers and leaders.
5. The General Assembly give thanks for those involved with organising and helping at the Big Free Rally.
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FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND – 2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

7. The General Assembly note with thankfulness the 60th anniversary of Free Church Youth Camps and thank all those involved in Camps since its conception in 1960.
8. The General Assembly thank the Youth Conference Committees for arranging the Conference in 2020 and the online Conference in 2021. The General Assembly note the sudden cancellation of the Youth Conference in 2020 and thank the Committee for its wisdom in making this decision. They commend the new Youth Conference Committee to the prayers of the Church.
9. The General Assembly thank all teachers for their devoted service in our Sunday Schools.
10. The General Assembly welcome the report of the Leadership Bootcamp from June 2019. They thank all who were involved in helping to lead this week. They note the cancellation of the Leadership Bootcamp which was due to run in June 2020. They also note the online sessions which took place in June 2020 and those which are due to take place in June 2021.
11. The General Assembly commend Praying for One Another to all Congregations to make use of.
12. The General Assembly thank Rev. Billy Graham for his series of daily devotionals and those involved in publicising the daily devotionals entitled *Walk with Me* and commend *Walk with Me* to individuals in the church to make use of.
13. The General Assembly commend the use of Resource Packs to all Congregations.
14. The General Assembly instruct the Mission Board to take cognisance of the progress made by a Group of Churches in Lewis convened and chaired by the Free Church Assembly Clerk. They direct the Board to work with other Christian churches and sympathetic organisations in order to make a suite of resources, shaped by a Christian worldview, available to schools, teachers and parents as an alternative to the materials proposed by Education Scotland; to assist parents in securing guidance as to how to approach schools and Local Authorities on this issue; and to ensure that parents understand their legal rights in terms of determining what is taught to their children and in respect of their right to withdraw their children from inappropriate sex education.

(F) GLOBAL MISSION

1. The General Assembly give thanks for the diligent work undertaken by those involved in Global Mission.
2. The General Assembly send greetings to all Free Church members working with mission organisations.
3. The General Assembly thank the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland for their ongoing partnership, prayerful and financial support of the overseas work of the Board.
4. The General Assembly note with their approval and thankfulness the compilation of a Memorandum of Understanding between Overseas Missionary Fellowship and the Free Church of Scotland. They also note that an official partnership is now in place between Overseas Missionary Fellowship and the Free Church of Scotland.
5. The General Assembly thank the Mission Board for the completion of a Global Mission Audit and note the relevant findings.
6. The General Assembly thank the Mission Board for the production of a Global Mission Strategy. They approve the strategy as the Global Mission Strategy of the Church.
7. The General Assembly thank the Board for coordinating the Appeal for India and note with thankfulness the generosity of the Church in its giving towards the Appeal.

(G) FINANCE

1. The General Assembly thank all congregations and members of the Church for their financial commitment during 2020 during the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions imposed by the Scottish Government.
2. They direct that the implementation of Act 1, Class 1, 2018, Paragraph 7, which requires a review and audit of congregations who have failed to remit the Ministry Levy and the appropriate level of the Administration and Training Levy in any one year, be waived regarding 2020 congregational remittances. They instruct the Mission Board and Presbyteries to terminate any such review initiated according to the terms of the said Act. They declare that the terms of the said Paragraph be applied to congregational remittances for 2021 and subsequent years.

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND – 2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 5. Free Church Books – Promotion Video.** The General Assembly received a promotional video presentation from Free Church Books highlighting a selection of recommended books.
- 6. Adjournment.** The General Assembly then adjourned to meet again at 2.00pm whereof public intimation having been given, the Session was closed with prayer.

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND – 2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 1. Constitute.** The General Assembly did again convene and was constituted with devotional exercises.
- 2. Order of the Day.** There was an Order of the Day at 2.05pm. In the absence of a visit from the Lord High Commissioner, Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, the Moderator read a letter from the Duke. The Duke expressed his being impressed to hear how Churches across Scotland had used technology to continue services, Sunday schools and youth camps. Furthermore, he mentioned how pleased he was to hear that the new Public Engagement Group is focussed on support for those with mental health challenges.
- 3. Loyal and Dutiful Address.** The General Assembly called for the Report on the Loyal and Dutiful Address to Her Majesty the Queen which was given by the Moderator. The Report was adopted and in accordance therewith, the address was agreed to and appointed to be duly signed and submitted 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 17th Day of May 2021, humbly offer Your Majesty this statement of our continued loyalty to Your Majesty's Person and Throne and to the Constitutional Monarchy of which you are the much loved and honoured Head and Representative.

We offer our deepest condolences to Your Majesty over the death of your beloved husband, His Royal Highness, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

We pray that in such a great loss you will experience the comfort of God and His particular care over you. We give thanks for the life of Prince Philip and for all that he was as a husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather. We also record our sincere gratitude for his service to our nation in World War II and his many years of selfless public service. He had a tremendous impact on innumerable people. In particular, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme has helped to transform the lives of millions of young people in the UK and across the globe, including many members of our denomination. We praise God that through this, and by so many other means, God used the life of Prince Philip to serve and strengthen others.

Over the past year our nation has faced the great upheaval of global pandemic. We are grateful to Your Majesty for your leadership, prayers and wise counsel to our nation. In a year of such great deprivation, loss and sorrow for many of your people, we thank Your Majesty for the ways in which, by word and deed, you have provided hope and comfort when it was most needed.

We are thankful to Your Majesty's Governments for the effort made to protect the peoples of the United Kingdom from COVID-19. We grieve the terrible loss of life to this virus in our nation, and across the world. We express our profound gratitude to those employed within the National Health Service, home carers, and all essential workers, who have sacrificed so much for the benefit of others. We express our thanks also for the manner in which Your Majesty and other members of the Royal Family, have sought to uphold and sustain Commonwealth citizens in their response to the pandemic. The rapid rollout of the vaccination programme across the United Kingdom is a remarkable achievement for which Your Majesty's Governments must be applauded. It is our sincere prayer that the vaccination programme will be swiftly implemented across all the nations of the Commonwealth.

We continue to pray for the good health of Your Majesty and for the health of all the Royal Household. We rejoice that Your Majesty has been blessed with two more great grandchildren, August Philip Hawke Brooksbank and Lucas Philip Tindall.

We note the hard-working service of members of Your Majesty's family, who assist in Your Royal and Constitutional duties and promote very many charities and good causes. We give thanks especially for the unstinting support given by the Royal Family to Your Majesty's Armed Forces. We are thankful for the continued service and sacrifice of all Your Majesty's Armed Forces and 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.

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.

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND – 2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

We give thanks for the continued recognition Your Majesty gives to the work and ministry of the Free Church of Scotland by the welcome visit to our General Assembly of Your Majesty's Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. We are sorry that we are unable to welcome the Duke of Cambridge in person this year.

Your Majesty, as Ministers and Elders of the Free Church of Scotland, we count it a privilege to 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 ask that the Lord Jesus Christ may daily be your refuge and your strength.

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.

The live streaming of General Assembly proceedings was switched off at this stage.

4. Mission Board – Supplementary Report. The General Assembly then called for the Report of the Mission Board Supplementary which being printed and in the hands of members, was referred to by the Chairman, Rev. Dr Robert J. Akroyd who addressed the Assembly and moved in terms of Item F7 in the deliverance.

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

The General Assembly note the report and recommendation of the Mission Board regarding the review of Asian Outreach in Glasgow and the appointment of Rev. Duncan Peters. They re-appoint Mr Peters to the work of Asian Outreach for a further period of five years according to the terms of the approved Development Plan, with the work fully funded by the Mission Board, and with the work and the appointment to be reviewed at the 2026 General Assembly. They thank Mr Peters for his services to the work of Asian Outreach over the years of his appointment and they commend him to the prayers of the Church.

4.2 Second Motion. It was moved and seconded that Paragraph 7 of Proposed Deliverance Section (F) Paragraph be replaced with the following:

The General Assembly note the report and recommendation of the Mission Board regarding the review of Asian Outreach in Glasgow and the appointment of Rev. Duncan Peters. They continue the current fully funded appointment to the 2022 General Assembly and instruct the Mission Board in consultation with the Presbytery of Glasgow and Argyll to present a proposal to the 2022 General Assembly for the future funding of this work in a way that is consistent with the Board's Principles of Funding Document. They thank Mr Peters for his services to the work of Asian Outreach over the years of his appointment and they commend him to the prayers of the Church.

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

The General Assembly note the report and recommendation of the Mission Board regarding the review of Asian Outreach in Glasgow and the appointment of Rev. Duncan Peters. They re-appoint Mr Peters to the work of Asian Outreach for a further period of five years according to the terms of the approved Development Plan, with the work fully funded by the Mission Board, and with the work and the appointment to be reviewed at the 2026 General Assembly. They thank Mr Peters for his services to the work of Asian Outreach over the years of his appointment and they commend him to the prayers of the Church.

5. Northern Presbytery. The General Assembly called for the Report of the Committee appointed by the March 2021 Commission of Assembly to examine the Complaint with Reasons, Responses to Reasons, and Petition submitted regarding the decision taken by the Northern Presbytery on Tuesday 16th February 2021 not to take Mr Iain R. Morrison on trials for licence.

5.1. The Bar of Assembly. The following parties were called to the Bar: (1) the Complainants – Rev. Calum Macmillan, Rev. Roddie MacRae, and Rev. Alistair MacInnes; (2) members of the Northern Presbytery who were members of the Presbytery when the decision was taken on Tuesday 16th February 2021; (3) the Petitioner – Mr Iain R. Morrison.

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5.2. **Conflict of Interest.** A conflict of interest was recorded for the following Commissioners from the Northern Presbytery who were not members of the Presbytery when the decision of 16th February was made: Mr Mark Robinson and Mr William Mackenzie.

5.3. **Assistant Clerk Report.** The Assistant Clerk, Rev. Nigel Anderson, informed the General Assembly of the procedure followed by the March 2021 Commission of Assembly when taking up the business referred to above and highlighting the following: (1) the appointment of the Committee to examine documents and interview parties; (2) the parties who are to appear at the Bar of Assembly; (3) that the Principal Clerk, Rev. Malcolm Macleod, and the Assistant Clerk, Rev. Stephen Allison, declared an interest in that they had advised the Presbytery and the Petitioner respectively during the process; (4) that the Western Isles Presbytery had an interest in that they had previously decided not to take Mr Iain R. Morrison on trials for licence, and that they could participate in the discussion but not propose amendments and addenda and not take part in votes taken on the matter.

5.4. **Committee Report.** Rev. Derek Lamont, Convener of the Commission of Assembly Committee, not being a Commissioner, was granted permission by the General Assembly to speak, and proceeded to present the Committee's report. Mr Iain K. Macleod, a member of the Committee, also addressed the General Assembly on the Committee's examination of the matter and on the contents of the report and the Proposed Deliverance.

5.5. **Complaint with Reasons.** The General Assembly took up consideration of the Complaint with Reasons submitted by members of the Northern Presbytery.

5.5.1. The Complainants, Rev. Calum MacMillan and Rev. Roddie MacRae, addressed the General Assembly on the Complaint with Reasons submitted by them and Rev. Alistair MacInnes.

5.5.2. The Defendants, Rev. Gordon Mair and Rev. Howard Stone, representing the Northern Presbytery, addressed the General Assembly on the Presbytery's response to the Reasons presented by the Complainants.

5.6. **Petitioner.** The Petitioner, Mr Iain R. Morrison, addressed the General Assembly on his Petition submitted to the Commission of Assembly in lieu of Appeal against the decision of the Northern Presbytery not to take him on trials for licence.

5.6.1. The Defendants, Rev. Gordon Mair and Rev. Howard Stone, representing the Northern Presbytery, addressed the General Assembly on the Presbytery's response to the Petition.

5.7. **Parties at the Bar.** Parties at the Bar of the Assembly were withdrawn.

5.8. **Motions.** The Moderator called for other motions.

5.8.1 **First Motion.** It was moved and seconded that:

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the report of the March 2021 Commission of Assembly Committee appointed examine the Dissent and Complaint from members of the Northern Presbytery regarding taking Mr Iain R. Morrison on trials for licence and thank all its members.

2. The General Assembly sustain the Dissent and Complaint from the members of the Northern Presbytery regarding the Presbytery's decision on Tuesday 16th February 2021, not to take Mr Iain R. Morrison on trials for licence on the grounds that that there was insufficient evidence to justify the decision of the Presbytery and that the Presbytery's procedures in dealing with Mr Morrison were flawed and failed to ensure a fair hearing for him.

3. The General Assembly instruct all Presbyteries to ensure better communication and greater pastoral sensitivity in processes which involve Officers of the Church and members within their bounds.

4. The General Assembly receive the Petition of Mr Iain R. Morrison, Ministry Assistant at Rosskeen, and grant its crave. They reverse the decision of the Northern Presbytery on Tuesday 16th February 2021 not to take Mr Morrison on trials for licence.

5. The General Assembly instruct the Northern Presbytery to proceed to take Mr Iain R. Morrison on trials for licence in terms of Act 40, Class 2, 2015 within two months from the rising of the Assembly. They note that the requirement of the said Act, that other Presbyteries be notified of the proposed licensing trials, has been completed and that, therefore, the conditions of Paragraphs One and Two of the Act have already been met.

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6. The General Assembly instruct the Assembly Clerks' Office, in consultation with the Board of Ministry, to review, revise and update Act 40, Class 2, 2015, and to bring draft proposals to the 2022 General Assembly. They also instruct the Board of Ministry to prepare guidelines to be issued with the revised Act to assist Presbyteries in the trials for licence process and to report on the completed guidelines to the 2022 General Assembly.

7. The General Assembly instruct the Assembly Clerks' Office, in consultation with the Board of Ministry, to prepare a set of guidelines as best practice for the Courts of the Church when interviewing individuals, particularly in sensitive pastoral issues. They further instruct the Assembly Clerks' Office in this process, to give guidance on the process of interviewing women and the inclusion of female representatives in an interview committee appointed by a Court of the Church.

The General Assembly instruct the Assembly Clerks' Office to examine the role of Ministry Assistants appointed by Kirk Sessions, as distinct from Assistant Ministers appointed under the provisions of Act 18, Class 2, 2013. They instruct the Assembly Clerks' Office to include the role of Ministry Assistants in the 2019 General Assembly remit to bring draft proposals for a new Act of Assembly to replace Act 10, Class 2, 2006 regarding the Appointment and Employment of Presbytery Workers. They instruct the Mission Board to prepare guidelines for the appointment and the day-to-day management of Ministry Assistants and to report on the completed guidelines to the 2022 General Assembly.

5.8.2 **Second Motion.** It was moved and seconded that the following be inserted to the Proposed Deliverance as new Paragraph 9:

The General Assembly appoint two Ministers and two Elders as General Assessors to the Northern Presbytery to support the Presbytery primarily in facilitating a review of their current practice and in a general supporting capacity for a period of two years concluding at the 2023 General Assembly. They direct that suitable Ministers and Elders be appointed for this purpose at the appropriate time in the Assembly programme in Session Five on Wednesday afternoon.

5.8.3 **Third Motion.** It was moved and seconded that the following be inserted as new Paragraph 5 in the Proposed Deliverance:

The General Assembly, noting the complex issues of the case before them, instruct the Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross to proceed to take Mr Iain R. Morrison on trials for licence in terms of Act 40, Class 2, 2015 within two months from the rising of the Assembly. They note that the requirement of the said Act, that other Presbyteries be notified of the proposed licensing trials, has been completed and that, therefore, the conditions of Paragraphs One and Two of the Act have already been met.

5.8.4 **Fourth Motion.** It was moved and seconded that the following be added as an addendum to Proposed Deliverance Paragraph 5:

The General Assembly declare that the question of proper person has now been addressed and the Presbytery should proceed with the trials.

5.9. **Voting.** On a vote being taken between the First motion and the Second Motion, the Second Motion carried. On a vote being taken between the First Motion and the Third Motion, the First Motion was carried. On a vote being taken between the First Motion and the Fourth Motion, the Fourth Motion was carried.

5.10. **Finding.** The finding of the General Assembly was found to be as follows:

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the report of the March 2021 Commission of Assembly Committee appointed examine the Dissent and Complaint from members of the Northern Presbytery regarding taking Mr Iain R. Morrison on trials for licence and thank all its members.
2. The General Assembly sustain the Dissent and Complaint from the members of the Northern Presbytery regarding the Presbytery's decision on Tuesday 16th February 2021, not to take Mr Iain R. Morrison on trials for licence on the grounds that that there was insufficient evidence to justify the decision of the Presbytery and that the Presbytery's procedures in dealing with Mr Morrison were flawed and failed to ensure a fair hearing for him.
3. The General Assembly instruct all Presbyteries to ensure better communication and greater pastoral sensitivity in processes which involve Officers of the Church and members within their bounds.

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4. The General Assembly receive the Petition of Mr Iain R. Morrison, Ministry Assistant at Rosskeen, and grant its crave. They reverse the decision of the Northern Presbytery on Tuesday 16th February 2021 not to take Mr Morrison on trials for licence.

5. The General Assembly instruct the Northern Presbytery to proceed to take Mr Iain R. Morrison on trials for licence in terms of Act 40, Class 2, 2015 within two months from the rising of the Assembly. They note that the requirement of the said Act, that other Presbyteries be notified of the proposed licensing trials, has been completed and that, therefore, the conditions of Paragraphs One and Two of the Act have already been met. They declare that the question of proper person has now been addressed and the Presbytery should proceed with the trials.

6. The General Assembly instruct the Assembly Clerks' Office, in consultation with the Board of Ministry, to review, revise and update Act 40, Class 2, 2015, and to bring draft proposals to the 2022 General Assembly. They also instruct the Board of Ministry to prepare guidelines to be issued with the revised Act to assist Presbyteries in the trials for licence process and to report on the completed guidelines to the 2022 General Assembly.

7. The General Assembly instruct the Assembly Clerks' Office, in consultation with the Board of Ministry, to prepare a set of guidelines as best practice for the Courts of the Church when interviewing individuals, particularly in sensitive pastoral issues. They further instruct the Assembly Clerks' Office in this process, to give guidance on the process of interviewing women and the inclusion of female representatives in an interview committee appointed by a Court of the Church.

8. The General Assembly instruct the Assembly Clerks' Office to examine the role of Ministry Assistants appointed by Kirk Sessions, as distinct from Assistant Ministers appointed under the provisions of Act 18, Class 2, 2013. They instruct the Assembly Clerks' Office to include the role of Ministry Assistants in the 2019 General Assembly remit to bring draft proposals for a new Act of Assembly to replace Act 10, Class 2, 2006 regarding the Appointment and Employment of Presbytery Workers. They instruct the Mission Board to prepare guidelines for the appointment and the day-to-day management of Ministry Assistants and to report on the completed guidelines to the 2022 General Assembly.

9. The General Assembly appoint two Ministers and two Elders as General Assessors to the Northern Presbytery to support the Presbytery primarily in facilitating a review of their current practice and in a general supporting capacity for a period of two years concluding at the 2023 General Assembly. They direct that suitable Ministers and Elders be appointed for this purpose at the appropriate time in the Assembly programme in Session Five on Wednesday afternoon.

5.11. **Parties Recalled.** The parties at the Bar were recalled and the Moderator announced to them the finding of the General Assembly. The Moderator asked them to indicate whether they acquiesced with the Assembly finding. All parties indicated their acquiescence.

6. Psalmody and Praise Committee. The General Assembly then called for the Report of the Psalmody and Praise Committee which being distributed to members, was referred to by the Convener, Rev. Ruairidh Maclean, who addressed the Assembly.

First Motion. It was moved, seconded that:

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Psalmody and Praise Committee and thank the Committee for its work.

2. The General Assembly remind congregations that the Book of Psalms is a unique manual of praise, which should be given a central place in our worship services. They again urge upon precentors, congregations and ministers a duty of intelligent and skillful psalm-singing, and the maintenance overall of a high standard of praise.

3. The General Assembly note the usefulness of the workshop service offered by the Committee to give practice in precenting and in better congregational singing and they encourage the Church to make use of this facility.

4. The General Assembly encourage congregations to set up regular sessions for psalmody practice, with a view to improving the standard of praise, learning any as yet unfamiliar items from Sing Psalms and Sing Scripture, and for congregational fellowship.

5. The General Assembly support the Committee in its endeavours to provide digital resources on the Free Church website and on the Free Church Psalmody and Praise Committee Facebook page.

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6. The General Assembly remind congregations that where praise items are projected on screen or printed on orders of service, copyright acknowledgement must be made for each item, for all Sing Psalms and for all hymns still in copyright. Scottish Psalter items do not require this, being out of copyright. Further guidance is available on the Free Church website, including links to PowerPoint slides.

Second Motion. It was moved, seconded that the following be inserted as new Paragraph 7 in the Proposed Deliverance:

The General Assembly instruct the Committee to examine its remit in consultation with Presbyteries and Congregations as to how this may be expanded for the good of the Church.

Third Motion. It was moved and second that the following be inserted as new Paragraph in the Proposed Deliverance:

The General Assembly recognising that the work currently undertaken by the Psalmody and Praise Committee does not warrant a stand-alone Committee, reconstitute the Committee with its present remit and membership as a Sub-Committee of the Mission Board.

Permissions. With permission of the Assembly, the Chairman accepted the Second Motion, and with the permission of the Assembly, the mover and seconder of the third motion withdrew the motion.

Finding: The finding of the General Assembly was as follows:

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Psalmody and Praise Committee and thank the Committee for its work.
 2. The General Assembly remind congregations that the Book of Psalms is a unique manual of praise, which should be given a central place in our worship services. They again urge upon precentors, congregations and ministers a duty of intelligent and skillful psalm-singing, and the maintenance overall of a high standard of praise.
 3. The General Assembly note the usefulness of the workshop service offered by the Committee to give practice in precenting and in better congregational singing and they encourage the Church to make use of this facility.
 4. The General Assembly encourage congregations to set up regular sessions for psalmody practice, with a view to improving the standard of praise, learning any as yet unfamiliar items from Sing Psalms and Sing Scripture, and for congregational fellowship.
 5. The General Assembly support the Committee in its endeavours to provide digital resources on the Free Church website and on the Free Church Psalmody and Praise Committee Facebook page.
 6. The General Assembly remind congregations that where praise items are projected on screen or printed on orders of service, copyright acknowledgement must be made for each item, for all Sing Psalms and for all hymns still in copyright. Scottish Psalter items do not require this, being out of copyright. Further guidance is available on the Free Church website, including links to PowerPoint slides.
 7. The General Assembly instruct the Board to examine its remit in consultation with Presbyteries and Congregations as to how this may be expanded for the good of the Church.
- 7. ETS Board.** The General Assembly then called for the Report of ETS which being in the hands of members, was referred to by Rev. Thomas Davis who addressed the Assembly.

Finding: It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report, and thank the Board, especially the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, for its work.
2. The General Assembly express their thankfulness to God for the ongoing growth of Edinburgh Theological Seminary. They commend the work of the Seminary to the prayers of the Church.
3. The General Assembly thank Principal Iver Martin for his leadership of the Seminary and encourage him to continue with his work of leading and promoting the Seminary.

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4. The General Assembly thank the full-time staff of Edinburgh Theological Seminary for their relevant, accurate and dedicated teaching of the Reformed Faith. They also thank visiting lecturers and others for their contribution to the instruction of students.
 5. The General Assembly thank Rev. Nigel Anderson for his work as the acting Course Organiser of Church History. The General Assembly also thank Dr John Ferguson for overseeing Church History postgraduate studies.
 6. The General Assembly welcome and approve of the appointment of Dr Zachary Purvis as Programme Leader and Lecturer in Church History and grant him a seat on the ETS Senate.
 7. The General Assembly thank Mrs Heather Watson for her work as Seminary Secretary and Mrs Ruth Smith for her work in administration and in looking after the Library.
 8. The General Assembly thank Mr Ewan Smith for his work in supporting the IT system and Mr Byron Goodwin for his work in helping maintain the building that ETS shares with the Free Church Offices.
 9. The General Assembly give thanks for the good relations between the Seminary and the University of Glasgow.
 10. The General Assembly note their encouragement arising from the number of students attending ETS and commend them to the prayers of the Church.
 11. The General Assembly thank Rev. Thomas Davis for his work in Marketing and Fundraising in connection with the Seminary.
 12. The General Assembly thank the Board for initiating the exploration of research leave for full-time academic staff. They encourage the Senate to take advantage of this opportunity when it becomes available.
 13. The Assembly grant the Board authority to confer the academic designation of Professor on a lecturer who substantially meets the following criteria: ‘The lecturer has published three monographs (or fifteen academic articles or equivalent); has shown academic leadership within the Seminary and outside (involvement in learned bodies, speaking at academic conferences, leading an international research project); has experience of teaching at Postgraduate level; is asked by others to write references for book proposals, research proposals; has done PhD examining, or has been an external examiner in more than one institution.’
 14. The General Assembly instruct the Seminary Board to ensure that, from 2022 onwards, the Principal’s Report incorporates developments in educational strategy, curriculum development, assessment reviews and pedagogical methodology as standing items so that the Assembly is fully apprised as to the teaching practices and curriculum at ETS.
 15. The General Assembly encourage Free Church Ministers to consider the Master of Theology degree.
- 8. ETS Quinquennial Review Committees.** The General Assembly then called for the Report of the Quinquennial Review of ETS which, being in the hands of members, was referred to by the Convener, Rev. Ivor Macdonald, who addressed the Assembly.

Finding: It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

1. The General Assembly receive the Report of the ETS Quinquennial Review Committee. They discharge the Committee and thank it for its work.
 2. The General Assembly commend Edinburgh Theological Seminary Senate for its commitment to the work of the Seminary amid challenging circumstances. They note the progress made and they encourage the Senate to address those areas still requiring attention.
 3. The General Assembly instruct the Senate to liaise with the Board of Ministry regarding components of training impacted by the new four-year Minister-in-Training model. They further instruct the Senate to address issues of flexibility regarding content.
 4. The General Assembly instruct the Seminary Board to ensure the delivery of those elements of the 2019 ETS Quinquennial Review Committee report which are still to be implemented. They instruct the Board to report back to the 2022 General Assembly on all the outstanding items.
- 9. Announcements.** The Principal Clerk reported on amendments and addenda submitted by Commissioners regarding the Report of the Board of Trustees.

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10. Adjournment. The General Assembly then adjourned to meet again at 9.00am on Wednesday 19th May 2021 whereof public intimation having been given, the Session was closed with prayer.

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A time of prayer was conducted before the Session was constituted.

1. **Constitute.** The General Assembly did again convene and was constituted with devotional exercises.
2. **Minutes of 2nd and 3rd Sessions.** The Minutes of the 2nd and 3rd Sessions were adjusted and approved.
3. **Report of the 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 Donald Forsyth who addressed the Assembly.
- 3.1. **First Motion.** It was moved and seconded that:

(A) GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGY

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Board of Trustees and thank the Chairman, members of the Board and the Church's staff for their work.
2. The General Assembly specifically record thanks to Mr James Fraser, Rev. Paul Clarke, Rev. Kenneth J. Macleod, Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean and Mr Callum Macdonald for serving on the Board, and to Mr Scott Matheson for his work as CEO.

(B) FINANCE AND TREASURY

1. The General Assembly acknowledge with humility and thanksgiving the provision made by the Lord for the work of the Church. They thank those who gave in a regular, responsible and liberal manner in support of that work.
2. The General Assembly instruct Presbyteries to send in their accounts to the Central Office finance team each year.

(C) PROPERTY

1. The General Assembly grant permission to London City Presbyterian Church to sell their manse. They declare that the proceeds from the sale shall be used for the purchase of a new manse.

(D) LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE

1. The General Assembly thank the COVID Group for their advice and leadership during the past year.
2. The General Assembly thank the Board and its Project Management Group for the work done on revising the arrangements for disciple and pastoral in the Church. They instruct the Board to bring proposals to the General Assembly or to one of its Commissions when the consultation process has been completed. They empower the Commission of Assembly to take up a report from the Board with final proposals on this matter.

(E) COMMUNICATIONS

1. The General Assembly note and endorse the emphases and direction of the *Communicating with Grace and Wisdom* as a general roadmap for improving communication across the denomination.
2. The General Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees to set up a Communication Group under its oversight. They direct that the Communications Group will seek the approval of the Board of Trustees before any action is taken which may incur institutional risk.
3. The General Assembly delete Paragraph 1 of Act 24, Class 2, 2017 regarding the Review of Communications Arrangements, and they renumber the remaining paragraphs as Paragraphs 1-3.
4. The General Assembly amend Act 6, Class 2, 2014 by deleting Paragraph 1.1.3 on the Media Office. They insert a new Paragraph 1.1.3 regarding the Communications Group and its remit as follows: to have overall responsibility for all internal and external communication; to progress the communications strategy developed by the now defunct Communications Oversight Group; to implement improvements in communications across the whole Church; to support the Media Officer in responding to media enquiries on behalf of the Church and to take over the remit of the current Media Group; to promote Public Engagement and to submit responses to Government consultations on behalf of the Church; to consult widely with Boards, Presbyteries and Congregations as required.

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5. The General Assembly further amend Act 6, Class 2, 2014 with the insertion of new Paragraph 1.1.3.1 regarding the membership of the Communications Group as follows: The membership and the Chairman of the Group will be appointed by the Board of Trustees.
6. The General Assembly direct that the existing Paragraph 1.1.4 regarding the membership of the Board of Trustees be renamed ‘Membership of the Board’ to avoid confusion in the reading of the Act.
7. The General Assembly instruct the Assembly Clerks’ Office in consultation with the Board of Trustees to revise Act 2, Class 2, 2008 regarding Appointing the Media Officer and Terms of Appointment and to bring revised proposals to the 2022 General Assembly.
8. The General Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the Communications Group, to consider the appointment of an additional communications staff member to work with the Communications Group to improve internal and external communication.
9. The General Assembly recognise the importance of the Church’s engagement in the Public Square. They declare that this engagement shall be part of the remit of the Communications Group. They instruct the Communications Group to encourage and support Congregations and Presbyteries to engage with Public Issues.
10. The General Assembly recognise that from time to time it will greatly assist engagement in the Public Square to have a group with a particular focus in this area. They authorise the Communications Group to establish a Public Engagement Working Group to identify key Public Issues and put together responses to Government Consultations. They direct that the Working Group will be an ad-hoc group reporting to the Communications Group, with its membership drawn from the membership of the Church and with power to appoint advisers as required. They instruct the Public Engagement Working Group to circulate draft reports on public consultations and engagements to Representatives appointed by Presbyteries, for comment. They declare that the Group shall have a permanent Coordinator appointed by the Board, who will sit on the Communications Group.
11. The General Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees to renew efforts to appoint a Parliamentary Liaison Officer.
12. The General Assembly recognise the need for greater coordination between Boards, and greater communication and sharing of prayer points between Boards, Committees, Presbyteries, and Congregations. They specifically instruct the Communications Group to take steps to improve this.
13. The General Assembly also recognise the need to provide ongoing training, in the various aspects of good communication, to Ministers and other Office-bearers throughout the Church. They instruct the Communication Group in conjunction with the Board of Ministry to consider suitable training options.

(F) GENERAL ASSEMBLY REMITS

1. The General Assembly note that the following remits from the 2019 General Assembly have not been completed by the Board of Trustees: (1) to develop protocols for the governance and financial arrangements of Church Plants and Preaching Stations, including the protocols surrounding the securing of charitable status and congregational status; (2) to establish a sub-group to look at the question of Christian Education and to report to each future Assembly; (3) in conjunction with the Mission Board to investigate methods of funding Church planting efforts in areas of social deprivation; (4) in consultation with the Assembly Clerks’ Office and the Board of Trustees’ Project Management Group, to bring forward proposals for the management of conflicts of interest regarding Commissioners at the General Assembly and its Commissions; and (5) the Project Management Group to consult with Presbyteries, individuals, the Board of Ministry, and to seek legal advice as required, regarding in conducting a review of the Questions and Formula. They instruct the Board to report on all outstanding remits to the 2022 General Assembly.

3.2. Second Motion. It was moved and seconded that the following additional Paragraph 3 to Proposed Deliverance, Section (A):

The General Assembly receive and adopt the vision statement, ‘A healthy Gospel Church for every community in Scotland’. They instruct the Board of Trustees to consult with Boards and Presbyteries regarding their Vision and Strategic Plan and to report on progress for the Strategic Plan to the 2022 General Assembly.

3.3. Third Motion. It was moved and seconded that the following change be made to Deliverance Section (E), Paragraph 2: replace ‘note and endorse’ with ‘receive and adopt’, the final deliverance to read:

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‘The General Assembly receive and adopt the emphases and direction of the Communicating with Grace and Wisdom as a general roadmap for improving communication across the denomination’.

3.4. Fourth Motion. It was moved and seconded that Section (E) Paragraph 9 be deleted and replaced with the following:

“The General Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees to inform the other Boards of Assembly on the possibility of funding for an additional post being available, and accordingly to enquire of other Boards, whether or not they would avail themselves of such a post and for what purpose, and further instruct the Board of Trustees to bring a proposal to a Commission of Assembly or the next General Assembly after taking consideration of their consultations and of their own priorities.

3.5. Fifth Motion. It was moved and seconded that the Overture of the Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross be adopted as an amendment to Section E 10-11 in the following terms:

The General Assembly to take these premises into consideration and enact and ordain that:

1. The General Assembly create the position of Public Engagement Coordinator. They declare that the Coordinator will be responsible for leading the Church’s public engagement. They further declare that the Coordinator will be appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Board of Trustees.

2. The General Assembly establish a Public Engagement Group, under the Board of Trustees, with the following remit:

2.1 To engage with and prepare responses to consultations from both the UK and Scottish Parliaments, and to arrange for suitable representation to be made if the Free Church is invited to give verbal evidence.

2.2 To establish ad-hoc committees, relating to particular areas of policy, as required which can prepare an initial draft response to consultations.

2.3 To establish a sounding body who will be asked for comments on proposed publications by email. The sounding body will include a representative from each home Presbytery, a representative of the Mission Board, a Member of the ETS Senate, and other representatives decided by the Public Engagement Group. The comments from the sounding body will be considered by the Public Engagement Group when approving the final response to ensure that the Group’s response to any issue is fairly representative of views across the Church.

2.4 To liaise with the Board of Trustees (or its executive) ahead of any publication, via the Chairman and CEO, to protect the institutional reputation of the Church.

2.5 To support Presbyteries or Kirk Sessions seeking to engage with Local Government, Health Boards, or other public bodies.

2.6 To work with and support the work of a Free Church Parliamentary Liaison Officer.

3. The General Assembly declare that the Membership of the Public Engagement Group will be appointed by the Board of Trustees in consultation with the Public Engagement Coordinator, and that Group will have a maximum of five members including the Public Engagement Coordinator *ex officio*, who will chair the Group and the Principal Clerk, *ex officio*, who will act as Clerk to the Group. They further declare that the Parliamentary Liaison Officer, *ex officio*, is appointed as an advisor to the Group.

4. The General Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees to appoint a Free Church Parliamentary Liaison Officer in consultation with the Public Engagement Coordinator as soon as possible, to ensure appropriate influencing takes place and to assist in generating the work required by the committee. They declare that Parliamentary Liaison Officer position may be a voluntary, part-time position.

It was also moved and seconded as part of this motion that the following that the following words be deleted from Section (E) Paragraph 5: “to promote Public Engagement and to submit responses to Government consultations on behalf of the Church”.

3.6. Sixth Motion. It was moved and seconded that the following amendment be made to the crave of the Overture of the Presbytery of Inverness, Lochaber and Ross:

1. To delete the whole of Sub-paragraph numbered 2.3.

2. To delete Paragraph 3 and replace it with the following:

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The General Assembly declare that, in order to ensure that the Group's response to any issue is fairly representative of views across the Church, the Membership of the Public Engagement Group will include two members of each of the home presbyteries, appointed by each presbytery, a representative of the Mission Board, a Member of the ETS Senate, as well as the Public Engagement Coordinator ex officio, who will chair the Group and the Principal Clerk, ex officio, who will act as Clerk to the Group. They further declare that the Parliamentary Liaison Officer, ex officio, is appointed as an advisor to the Group.

3.7. Voting. With the permission of the Assembly the Chairman accepted the Second Motion. On a vote being taken between the First Motion and the Third Motion, the Third Motion was carried. On a vote being taken between the First Motion and the Fourth Motion, the First Motion was carried. On a vote being taken between the Sixth Motion and the Fifth Motion (Overture), the Fifth Motion was carried. On a vote being taken between the First Motion and the Fifth Motion (Overture), the Fifth Motion was carried.

3.8. The Finding. The finding of the Assembly was as follows:

(A) GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGY

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Board of Trustees and thank the Chairman, members of the Board and the Church's staff for their work.
2. The General Assembly specifically record thanks to Mr James Fraser, Rev. Paul Clarke, Rev. Kenneth J. Macleod, Rev. Dr Malcolm M. Maclean and Mr Callum Macdonald for serving on the Board, and to Mr Scott Matheson for his work as CEO.
3. The General Assembly receive, endorse and adopt the vision statement, A healthy Gospel Church for every community in Scotland. They instruct the Board of Trustees to consult with Boards and Presbyteries regarding their Vision and Strategic Plan and to report on progress for the Strategic Plan to the 2022 General Assembly.

(B) FINANCE AND TREASURY

1. The General Assembly acknowledge with humility and thanksgiving the provision made by the Lord for the work of the Church. They thank those who gave in a regular, responsible and liberal manner in support of that work.
2. The General Assembly instruct Presbyteries to send in their accounts to the Central Office finance team each year.

(C) PROPERTY

1. The General Assembly grant permission to London City Presbyterian Church to sell their manse. They declare that the proceeds from the sale shall be used for the purchase of a new manse.

(D) LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE

1. The General Assembly thank the COVID Group for their advice and leadership during the past year.
2. The General Assembly thank the Board and its Project Management Group for the work done on revising the arrangements for disciple and pastoral in the Church. They instruct the Board to bring proposals to the General Assembly or to one of its Commissions when the consultation process has been completed. They empower the Commission of Assembly to take up a report from the Board with final proposals on this matter.

(E) COMMUNICATIONS

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Biblical Principles as outlined in Communicating with Grace and Wisdom.
2. The General Assembly receive and adopt the emphases and direction of Communicating with Grace and Wisdom as a general roadmap for improving communication across the denomination.
3. The General Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees to set up a Communication Group under its oversight. They direct that the Communications Group will seek the approval of the Board of Trustees before any action is taken which may incur institutional risk.
4. The General Assembly delete Paragraph 1 of Act 24, Class 2, 2017 regarding the Review of Communications Arrangements, and they renumber the remaining paragraphs as Paragraphs 1-3.

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5. The General Assembly amend Act 6, Class 2, 2014 by deleting Paragraph 1.1.3 on the Media Office. They insert a new Paragraph 1.1.3 regarding the Communications Group and its remit as follows: to have overall responsibility for all internal and external communication; to progress the communications strategy developed by the now defunct Communications Oversight Group; to implement improvements in communications across the whole Church; to support the Media Officer in responding to media enquiries on behalf of the Church and to take over the remit of the current Media Group;; to consult widely with Boards, Presbyteries and Congregations as required.
6. The General Assembly further amend Act 6, Class 2, 2014 with the insertion of new Paragraph 1.1.3.1 regarding the membership of the Communications Group as follows: The membership and the Chairman of the Group will be appointed by the Board of Trustees.
7. The General Assembly direct that the existing Paragraph 1.1.4 regarding the membership of the Board of Trustees be renamed ‘Membership of the Board’ to avoid confusion in the reading of the Act.
8. The General Assembly instruct the Assembly Clerks’ Office in consultation with the Board of Trustees to revise Act 2, Class 2, 2008 regarding Appointing the Media Officer and Terms of Appointment and to bring revised proposals to the 2022 General Assembly.
9. The General Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the Communications Group, to consider the appointment of an additional communications staff member to work with the Communications Group to improve internal and external communications.
10. The General Assembly create the position of Public Engagement Coordinator. They declare that the Coordinator will be responsible for leading the Church’s public engagement. They further declare that the Coordinator will be appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Board of Trustees.
11. The General Assembly establish a Public Engagement Group, under the Board of Trustees, with the following remit:
 - 11.1 To engage with and prepare responses to consultations from both the UK and Scottish Parliaments, and to arrange for suitable representation to be made if the Free Church is invited to give verbal evidence.
 - 11.2 To establish ad-hoc committees, relating to particular areas of policy, as required which can prepare an initial draft response to consultations.
 - 11.3 To establish a sounding body who will be asked for comments on proposed publications by email. The sounding body will include a representative from each home Presbytery, a representative of the Mission Board, a Member of the ETS Senate, and other representatives decided by the Public Engagement Group. The comments from the sounding body will be considered by the Public Engagement Group when approving the final response to ensure that the Group’s response to any issue is fairly representative of views across the Church.
 - 11.4 To liaise with the Board of Trustees (or its executive) ahead of any publication, via the Chairman and CEO, to protect the institutional reputation of the Church.
 - 11.5 To support Presbyteries or Kirk Sessions seeking to engage with Local Government, Health Boards, or other public bodies.
 - 11.6 To work with and support the work of a Free Church Parliamentary Liaison Officer.
12. The General Assembly declare that the Membership of the Public Engagement Group will be appointed by the Board of Trustees in consultation with the Public Engagement Coordinator, and that Group will have a maximum of five members including the Public Engagement Coordinator *ex officio*, who will chair the Group and the Principal Clerk, *ex officio*, who will act as Clerk to the Group. They further declare that the Parliamentary Liaison Officer, *ex officio*, is appointed as an adviser to the Group.
13. The General Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees to appoint a Free Church Parliamentary Liaison Officer in consultation with the Public Engagement Coordinator as soon as possible, to ensure appropriate influencing takes place and to assist in generating the work required by the committee. They declare that Parliamentary Liaison Officer position may be a voluntary, part-time position

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14. The General Assembly recognise the need for greater coordination between Boards, and greater communication and sharing of prayer points between Boards, Committees, Presbyteries, and Congregations. They specifically instruct the Communications Group to take steps to improve this.

15. The General Assembly also recognise the need to provide ongoing training, in the various aspects of good communication, to Ministers and other Office-bearers throughout the Church. They instruct the Communication Group in conjunction with the Board of Ministry to consider suitable training options.

(F) GENERAL ASSEMBLY REMITS

1. The General Assembly note that the following remits from the 2019 General Assembly have not been completed by the Board of Trustees: (1) to develop protocols for the governance and financial arrangements of Church Plants and Preaching Stations, including the protocols surrounding the securing of charitable status and congregational status; (2) to establish a sub-group to look at the question of Christian Education and to report to each future Assembly; (3) in conjunction with the Mission Board to investigate methods of funding Church planting efforts in areas of social deprivation; (4) in consultation with the Assembly Clerks' Office and the Board of Trustees' Project Management Group, to bring forward proposals for the management of conflicts of interest regarding Commissioners at the General Assembly and its Commissions; and (5) the Project Management Group to consult with Presbyteries, individuals, the Board of Ministry, and to seek legal advice as required, regarding in conducting a review of the Questions and Formula. They instruct the Board to report on all outstanding remits to the 2022 General Assembly.

4. **Adjournment.** The General Assembly then adjourned to meet again at 2.00pm whereof public intimation having been given, the Session was closed with prayer.

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1. **Constitute.** The General Assembly did again convene and was constituted with devotional exercises.
2. **Report of the Board of Ministry.** The General Assembly then called for the Report of the Board of Ministry which, being distributed to members, was referred to by the Chairman, Rev. Paul Clarke, who addressed the Assembly.
- 2.1. **First Motion:** It was moved and seconded that:

(A) GENERAL

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Board of Ministry and thank the Board, and especially the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for their work.
2. The General Assembly recognise the enormous amount of work carried out by Rev. Alex MacDonald as the Pastoral Care Worker, and thank him for his service.
3. The General Assembly thank those who have served on the Panel for Pastoral Care, and all the consultants and advisers who assist the Board of Ministry, along with those who facilitate In-Service Training.
4. The General Assembly welcome the progress made by the Student Team of the Board of Ministry, as reflected in its 'Vision for Training' document. They instruct the Board to bring details of its updated Minister-in-Training programme to a Commission of Assembly.
5. The General Assembly welcome the progress made by the Ministry Team of the Board of Ministry. They instruct the Board to come to the May 2022 Assembly with clear proposals to take forward its work.
6. The General Assembly agree to meet in private session to take up and dispose of a Supplementary Report from the Board of Ministry concerning the Application to Free Church ministry of Rev. Dr Cory Brock, including the signing of the Formula, should the application be successful.
7. The General Assembly note that the Board has not been able to bring a report to the Assembly on the question of ordination as a requirement for the administration of the sacraments as instructed by the 2019 General Assembly. They instruct the Board to report on this remit to the 2022 General Assembly.

(B) JOURNEY INTO THE MINISTRY

1. The General Assembly, seeking to revise and update arrangements and procedures regarding the application process to become a Candidate for Free Church Ministry and oversight and support of such Candidates before they are licensed to preach the gospel, enact and ordains as follows:

The General Assembly note that the biblical qualifications for pastors and teachers do not focus entirely, or even primarily, on their academic achievements, natural gifting or theological knowledge (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3). They declare that the Free Church of Scotland seeks to identify and train faithful, reliable and humble men of God, motivated only by love for Christ and his people, who are called by God into a life of service.

SECTION A – Pre-Application

1. Prior to an applicant completing an application form, intending applicants should hold informal conversations with their Minister and Kirk Session and be given opportunities to test their teaching gifts within a local church. If candidacy looks likely, the Kirk Session should inform the Presbytery.
2. The Presbytery will then inform the Board of Ministry, who may then appoint a training mentor, in consultation with the Presbytery, and assist in training and developing the candidate's gifts.
3. The Board of Ministry will prepare guidance to assist congregations and Presbyteries in the pre-application stage.

SECTION B - Application Process

1. In order to apply to be a Candidate for the Free Church Ministry the applicant must be:
 - 1.1. Male.
 - 1.2. Over the age of eighteen.

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- 1.3. Have been a Communicant Member of a Christian church for a minimum of two years.
- 1.4. Have been a Communicant Member of a Free Church congregation for a minimum of six months.
- 1.5. Have not applied as a candidate for ministry in the Free Church within the previous two years.
2. All Applicants shall complete the Application Form produced by the Board of Ministry.
 - 2.1. A Minister or Session Clerk shall make the Application Form available to any potential candidates within their congregation.
 - 2.2. The Applicant shall give their completed Application Form to the Minister or to the Clerk of the Kirk Session.
 - 2.3. Applications may be received by the Kirk Session at any time of year.
 - 2.4. In order to begin studies at Edinburgh Theological Seminary in September the Application Form must be processed by the Kirk Session by the end of February of the same year.
3. Upon receipt of an Application Form, the Kirk Session shall discuss the suitability of the Applicant for the role of Minister.
 - 3.1. The Kirk Session will interview the Applicant as soon as possible after receipt of the Application Form.
 - 3.2. If the Applicant is married the Applicant and his wife will also meet with the Minister and his wife (or if the Minister is unmarried by the Minister and another married couple) to assess whether the Applicant's wife is supportive of his candidacy. The Board will provide a list of questions for discussion. The minutes of the discussion will be given to the Kirk Session and taken into consideration when they are making their assessment of the candidate.
 - 3.3. The Kirk Session shall meet without the Applicant to come to a decision on whether his Application will progress to the next stage.
 - 3.4. The Kirk Session shall inform the Applicant of their decision within seven days of the meeting.
4. Where an Application proceeds to the next stage the Kirk Session shall inform their Presbytery within seven days of their decision.
 - 4.1. The Presbytery Clerk should be given a copy of the Application Form.
 - 4.2. The Presbytery Clerk should send notice of the Application to all members of Presbytery taking care to secure the confidentiality of personal information.
 - 4.3. Presbytery and Kirk Session Representatives should listen to sermon recordings of the Applicant prior to interview.
5. The Presbytery shall appoint a date to interview the Applicant and may appoint a Committee to carry out this stage of the process.
 - 5.1. At the end of this interview, the Presbytery shall come to a view on whether the application should progress to the next stage of the process.
 - 5.2. The Interview can be conducted by the Personnel Committee of the Presbytery, or other similar committee, where this role has been delegated to them by the Presbytery.
 - 5.3. At least two members of the relevant Kirk Session must be present at the interview.
 - 5.4. The Board of Ministry shall provide all Presbyteries with appropriate interview questions and guidance.
6. At its Ordinary Meeting, the Presbytery shall take up consideration of the Applicant and the Application Form. It shall be moved, seconded and agreed that the Applicant can proceed to the next stage of the process if the Presbytery decide the Applicant is suitable.
 - 6.1. The Presbytery will receive the report of the interview committee with their recommendations.

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- 6.2. The Applicant shall appear before the whole Presbytery and any further questions can be put to him by any member of the Presbytery.
- 6.3. The Applicant will be asked to leave the room and the Presbytery will then decide on whether his Application will be approved and recommended for consideration by the Board of Ministry.
- 6.4. The Presbytery shall come to a decision on the approval of the application by way of a suitable motion recording their approval of the Application.
- 6.5. The Presbytery shall inform the Applicant of progress with his application no later than seven days after the decision is taken.
7. The Presbytery must inform the Board of Ministry of any successful applications within seven days of approving an application, and they shall pass on all relevant documents to the Board at this time.
8. The Applicant will be required to attend an Assessment Day.
- 8.1. Assessment Days shall be organised by the Board of Ministry.
- 8.2. The Board of Ministry, and several others appointed by them, will assess Applicants' suitability for Ministry.
- 8.3. At least one female assessor shall be present at each Assessment Day.
- 8.4. Assessment Days will take place as required.
- 8.5. The Board of Ministry or Representatives of the Board will conduct an interview with the Applicant during or shortly after the Assessment Day.
9. After the Assessment Day and Interview, a Report will come to the Board of Ministry.
- 9.1. The Board of Ministry shall come to a decision on whether the Applicant is a suitable Candidate for Free Church Ministry. They shall also assess his training requirements in the context of becoming a suitable person to be licensed for Ministry.
- 9.2. The Board of Ministry shall inform the Applicant of their decision regarding his candidacy within seven days of the next Board meeting. This must be in writing.
- 9.3. If the Applicant is accepted as a Candidate for the ministry, the Board of Ministry must inform the Applicant of their decision regarding the training requirements within twenty one days. This must be in writing.
10. When an Applicant is married then due consideration for his wife must be taken at every stage of the Application Process
- 10.1. The Board of Ministry shall ensure that the Application Form includes a section for wives to complete.
- 10.2. Wives should also attend the Assessment Day where possible.

SECTION C - Application Form

The Board of Ministry hold the responsibility for creating an Application Form and providing interview questions for Presbyteries.

1. The Board of Ministry shall create an Application Form to be used for Applicants for Free Church Ministry.
- 1.1. The Board of Ministry shall create Regulations to govern the content of the Application Form.
- 1.2. The General Assembly reserves the right to review the Application Form and any Regulations related to the Application Form.
- 1.3. The content of the Application form must comply with civil legislation.
- 1.4. The Application Form shall be reviewed by the Board of Ministry on a yearly basis.

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2. The Board of Ministry shall create an Application Information Sheet to be released with the Application Form.
- 2.1. The Application Information Sheet will detail how to complete the Application Form and provide information on the process to become a Candidate for Free Church Ministry.
3. The Board of Ministry shall create interview questions to be used by Presbytery during the Application process, including questions regarding sensitive information, and provide these to each Presbytery.
 - 3.1 The Board of Ministry shall create Regulations to govern the content of the interview questions.
 - 3.2 The General Assembly reserves the right to review the interview questions and any Regulations related to the interview questions.
 - 3.3 The interview questions shall be reviewed by the Board of Ministry on a yearly basis.
4. Retention of Records
 - 4.1 The Board of Ministry is responsible for storing all information gathered during the Application Process in a manner that complies with civil law.

SECTION D - Decisions on Route to Ministry

Upon offering Candidacy to an Applicant, the Board of Ministry shall devise a study plan for each candidate. The Board of Ministry will arrange this study plan in conjunction with Edinburgh Theological Seminary.

1. All Candidates should complete the full course of study available to Edinburgh Theological Seminary and achieve a pass of the BTh.
2. All Candidates must complete the Presbyterian Church Ministry Module and attend Preaching Seminars as required by the Board of Ministry before being licensed.
3. Exceptions to the requirement for all candidates to complete the full BTh can be made in particular circumstances:
 - 3.1 When the Candidate has already completed theological studies, he may be required to undertake courses at ETS at the discretion of the Board of Ministry.
 - 3.2 ETS shall devise an examination which will assist the Board of Ministry in assessing the Candidate's knowledge if he has already completed theological study.
 - 3.3 The Board of Ministry can in exceptional circumstances waive the requirement to study the Biblical languages.
4. The Board of Ministry shall publish a Candidate Information Guide in conjunction with ETS each academic year. This shall be distributed by the Board of Ministry to all Candidates at the beginning of each academic year.

SECTION E - Support for Free Church Ministry Candidates

Free Church Candidates have a responsibility to live a life above reproach, suitable of that of a Minister of the Gospel and must make themselves available for mentoring and accountability.

1. Every Candidate will be provided with a mentor by Presbytery. The mentor will typically be a member of that Presbytery.
 - 1.1 Mentors shall contact their assigned Candidate at least twice per semester.
 - 1.2 Mentors shall discuss matters of personal and professional development with the Candidate.
 - 1.3 All discussions between Mentor and their assigned Candidate shall take place in strict confidence unless a safeguarding issue is disclosed, or any matter that may call into question the integrity of the Candidate and their suitability for Ministry.
 - 1.4 The Board of Ministry are responsible for ensuring that Mentors are in place and that Mentors are in contact with their assigned Candidate at least twice per Semester.

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2. ETS shall appoint a Director of Studies to each Candidate.
 - 2.1. The Director of Studies shall send a report to Presbytery and the Board of Ministry on the Candidate's academic progress at the end of each academic year.
 - 2.2. The Director of Studies should also report on any other issues that have arisen over the course of the year.
 - 2.3. If any issues regarding the academic progress of a Candidate emerge during the year the Director of Studies shall report this to Presbytery and the Board of Ministry as soon as is practicable.
3. The Board of Ministry reserve the right to hold a meeting with a Candidate at any point.
 - 3.1. The Board of Ministry can use such meetings to discuss any matter regarding the progress of the Candidate.
 - 3.2. The Candidate may bring a friend or their Mentor to any of these meetings (such a friend should be a communicant member in the Free Church or another Christian church).
 - 3.3. The Board of Ministry shall bring any concerns regarding a Candidate to the Presbytery as soon as is practicable.
 - 3.4. At the end of each academic year the Board of Ministry shall report to Presbytery on each Candidate's progress.
4. The local congregation where the candidate is serving shall send a report to Presbytery and the Board of Ministry on the Candidate's involvement with the local congregation at the end of each academic year.
 - 4.1. Where this is a training congregation, details of training undertaken by the candidate should be provided in the report.
5. At the end of each academic year, Presbytery shall certify that the Candidate is able to continue in his role.
 - 5.1. They shall review all information received from the Board of Ministry, the local congregation and ETS on the Candidate's Progress.
 - 5.2. They will interview the Candidate and discuss matters related to his Candidacy and continued suitability for ministry.
 - 5.3. If any particular issues are raised by a Candidate's Mentor, Accountability Partner, Director of Studies or the Board of Ministry these will be discussed with the Candidate.
 - 5.4. In their assessment of the Candidate, the Presbytery shall satisfy themselves as far as possible that the Candidate is a suitable person to sign the Formula.
 - 5.5. The Presbytery will issue a certificate, before the commencement of the ensuing academic year, to the Candidate, ETS and the Board of Ministry to certify his continued status as a Candidate.
6. A Candidate is under the pastoral oversight of the Presbytery of the Congregation in which he is a Communicant Member.

SECTION F - Ending a Candidacy

1. The candidacy shall be kept under review by the Presbytery and the Board of Ministry. This review may on occasions lead to the conclusion that there are potential grounds to end the candidacy.
2. If ETS Senate has cause for concern about a candidate, they shall report this to the Presbytery and the Board as soon as possible.
3. Prior to the commencement of a formal process of terminating the candidacy, the Presbytery and the Board shall seek to help the Candidate to resolve the problems leading to concerns over their suitability as a candidate for the ministry.
4. Should such efforts fail to resolve the situation, a review committee will be established comprising three members of the Presbytery and three members of the Board of Ministry. The Board's representatives shall include the Chairman who will also act as Convener of the Review Committee.

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5. The Review Committee shall have powers to interview the Candidate, to arrange support for the Candidate, and to recommend to the Board of Ministry to terminate the candidacy should the concerns raised regarding the candidacy be confirmed.
6. The candidate shall be given every opportunity to find a resolution of the problem.
 - 6.1. The Committee shall consult with the ETS Senate and receive a report from them on the Candidate's progress, character and suitability as a candidate for the ministry.
 - 6.2. The Committee shall consult with the Minister of the candidate's training Church, where he is on a Minister-in-Training programme.
 - 6.3. The Committee shall consult with the Presbytery and receive a report from them on their oversight and examination of the Candidate.
 - 6.4. The Review Committee shall consider the candidacy and the problems that have arisen, taking cognisance of the Senate's report, the Presbytery's report, and the record of the Board's previous deliberations on the matter, before proceeding to interview the Candidate.
 - 6.5. The Candidate shall be invited to appear before the Review Committee, accompanied by a friend or his mentor, to address the concerns that have been raised and to seek a solution. The process may require more than one meeting with the Candidate before a final recommendation is made.
 - 6.6. The Candidate shall leave the room before the Committee considers the details of the interview and come to a recommendation on the matter.
7. Should the Review Committee find that the potential grounds for terminating the candidacy have been confirmed by the review process, they shall report to the Presbytery and the Board accordingly, with their conclusions and recommendations. The Committee shall also inform the candidate of their conclusions and recommendations
7. The Board of Ministry will meet to reach a final decision on the Committee's recommendation.
 - 8.1. The Candidate and a representative of the Presbytery will have a right to address the Board of Ministry before the Board reaches its decision.
 - 8.2. The Candidate shall leave the room before the Board considers the details of the recommendation on the matter.
 - 8.3. The Candidate will be informed of the final decision in writing within 7 days.
 - 8.4. The Board will ensure that suitable pastoral support is made available to the Candidate.
8. Any decision made by the Board of Ministry regarding ongoing candidacy can be appealed by the Candidate or the Presbytery to the General Assembly or one of its Commissions.
9. After losing their position as Candidate, a period of at least two years must pass before they can reapply.

SECTION G - Repeals

The General Assembly repeal the following Acts: Section 1 of Act 19, Class 2, 2016; Act 38, Class 2, 2015; Act 48, Class 2, 2012; and Act 37, Class 2, 2012.

2.2. Second Motion. It was also moved and seconded that Paragraph 1.2 in Section B, Application Process be replaced with the following: "Aged twenty-one years or over."

2.3. Third Motion. It was moved and seconded that the following paragraph be inserted as new Paragraph 8 in the Proposed Deliverance Section (A):

The General Assembly amend Paragraph 2.2 of Act 19, 2016 (Recognition of Candidates and Admission of Ministers) to read: "The Board shall agree to interview the applicant, and come to a decision on the application if: (1) the Presbytery supports the application and is satisfied that the applicant is a suitable person to hold a ministerial charge in the Free Church of Scotland; (2) the applicant has completed the Free Church Ministry Module (available online at ETS); and (3) the

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applicant gives an unqualified and appropriate response to the Questions put to licentiates, and is willing to sign the Formula.”

2.4. Fourth Motion. It was moved and seconded that Section (B), Application Process, Paragraph 9.3 be amended with the addition of the words “and the Presbytery” so that the Paragraph reads:

“If the Applicant is accepted as a Candidate for the ministry, the Board of Ministry must inform the Applicant and the Presbytery of their decision regarding the training requirements within twenty-one days. This must be in writing.”

2.5. Fifth Motion. It was moved and seconded that Proposed Deliverance (B) Journey to Ministry, Section F be deleted and replaced with the following:

1. The candidacy shall be kept under review by the Presbytery and the Board of Ministry. This review may on occasions lead to the conclusion that there are potential grounds to end the candidacy.
2. If the ETS Senate has cause for concern about a candidate, they shall report this to the Presbytery and the Board as soon as possible.
3. Prior to the commencement of a formal process of terminating the candidacy, the Presbytery and the Board shall seek to help the Candidate to resolve the problems leading to concerns over their suitability as a candidate for the ministry.
4. Should such efforts fail to resolve the situation, a review committee will be established comprising three members of the Presbytery and three members of the Board of Ministry. The Board’s representatives shall include the Chairman who will also act as Convener of the Review Committee.
5. The Review Committee shall have powers to interview the Candidate, to arrange support for the Candidate, and to recommend to the Presbytery to terminate the candidacy should the concerns raised regarding the candidacy be confirmed.
6. The candidate shall be given every opportunity to find a resolution of the problem.
- 6.1. The Committee shall consult with the ETS Senate and receive a report from them on the Candidate’s progress, character and suitability as a candidate for the ministry.
- 6.2. The Committee shall consult with the Minister of the candidate’s training Church, where he is on a Minister-in-Training programme.
- 6.3. The Committee shall consult with the Board and receive a report from them on their oversight and examination of the Candidate.
- 6.4. The Review Committee shall consider the candidacy and the problems that have arisen, taking cognisance of the Senate’s report, the Board’s report, and the record of the Presbytery’s previous deliberations on the matter, before proceeding to interview the Candidate.
- 6.5. The Candidate shall be invited to appear before the Review Committee, accompanied by a friend or his mentor, to address the concerns that have been raised and to seek a solution. The process may require more than one meeting with the Candidate before a final recommendation is made.
- 6.6. The Candidate shall leave the room before the Committee considers the details of the interview and come to a recommendation on the matter.
7. Should the Review Committee find that the potential grounds for terminating the candidacy have been confirmed by the review process, they shall report to the Presbytery and the Board accordingly, with their conclusions and recommendations. The Committee shall also inform the candidate of their conclusions and recommendations.
8. The Presbytery will meet to reach a final decision on the Committee’s recommendation.
- 8.1. The Candidate and a representative of the Board of Ministry will have a right to address the Presbytery before the Presbytery reaches its decision.

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- 8.2. The Candidate shall leave the room before the Presbytery considers the details of the recommendation on the matter.
- 8.3. The Candidate and the Board of Ministry will be informed of the final decision in writing within 7 days.
- 8.4. The Presbytery in consultation with the Board will ensure that suitable pastoral support is made available to the Candidate.
9. Any decision made by the Presbytery regarding ongoing candidacy can be appealed by the Candidate to the General Assembly or one of its Commissions within 10 days of receiving the written decision.
10. The Chairman of the Board of Ministry will also have a right to appeal the decision of the Presbytery to the General Assembly or one of its Commissions, within 10 days of receiving the written decision, where the proper procedure has not been followed or relevant information has been disregarded by the Presbytery.

2.6. The Finding. With the permission of the Assembly, the Chairman accepted the Second Motion, the Third Motion, and the Fourth Motion. On a vote being taken between the First Motion and the Fifth Motion, the Fifth Motion was carried, and the finding was as follows:

(A) GENERAL

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report of the Board of Ministry and thank the Board, and especially the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for their work.
2. The General Assembly recognise the enormous amount of work carried out by Rev. Alex MacDonald as the Pastoral Care Worker, and they thank him for his service.
3. The General Assembly thank those who have served on the Panel for Pastoral Care, and all the consultants and advisers who assist the Board of Ministry, along with those who facilitate In-Service Training.
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5. The General Assembly welcome the progress made by the Ministry Team of the Board of Ministry. They instruct the Board to come to the May 2022 Assembly with clear proposals to take forward its work.
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(B) JOURNEY INTO THE MINISTRY

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They declare that the Free Church of Scotland seeks to identify and train faithful, reliable and humble men of God, motivated only by love for Christ and his people, who are called by God into a life of service.

SECTION A – Pre-Application

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2. The Presbytery will then inform the Board of Ministry, who may then appoint a training mentor, in consultation with the Presbytery, and assist in training and developing the candidate's gifts.
3. The Board of Ministry will prepare guidance to assist congregations and Presbyteries in the pre-application stage.

SECTION B - Application Process

1. In order to apply to be a Candidate for the Free Church Ministry the applicant must be:
 - 1.1. Male.
 - 1.2. Over the age of twenty-one.
 - 1.3. Have been a Communicant Member of a Christian church for a minimum of two years.
 - 1.4. Have been a Communicant Member of a Free Church congregation for a minimum of six months.
 - 1.5. Have not applied as a candidate for ministry in the Free Church within the previous two years.
2. All Applicants shall complete the Application Form produced by the Board of Ministry.
 - 2.1. A Minister or Session Clerk shall make the Application Form available to any potential candidates within their congregation.
 - 2.2. The Applicant shall give their completed Application Form to the Minister or to the Clerk of the Kirk Session.
 - 2.3. Applications may be received by the Kirk Session at any time of year.
 - 2.4. In order to begin studies at Edinburgh Theological Seminary in September the Application Form must be processed by the Kirk Session by the end of February of the same year.
3. Upon receipt of an Application Form, the Kirk Session shall discuss the suitability of the Applicant for the role of Minister.
 - 3.1. The Kirk Session will interview the Applicant as soon as possible after receipt of the Application Form.
 - 3.2. If the Applicant is married the Applicant and his wife will also meet with the Minister and his wife (or if the Minister is unmarried by the Minister and another married couple) to assess whether the Applicant's wife is supportive of his candidacy. The Board will provide a list of questions for discussion. The minutes of the discussion will be given to the Kirk Session and taken into consideration when they are making their assessment of the candidate.
 - 3.3. The Kirk Session shall meet without the Applicant to come to a decision on whether his Application will progress to the next stage.
 - 3.4. The Kirk Session shall inform the Applicant of their decision within seven days of the meeting.
4. Where an Application proceeds to the next stage the Kirk Session shall inform their Presbytery within seven days of their decision.
 - 4.1. The Presbytery Clerk should be given a copy of the Application Form.
 - 4.2. The Presbytery Clerk should send notice of the Application to all members of Presbytery taking care to secure the confidentiality of personal information.

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- 4.3. Presbytery and Kirk Session Representatives should listen to sermon recordings of the Applicant prior to interview.
5. The Presbytery shall appoint a date to interview the Applicant and may appoint a Committee to carry out this stage of the process.
 - 5.1. At the end of this interview, the Presbytery shall come to a view on whether the application should progress to the next stage of the process.
 - 5.2. The Interview can be conducted by the Personnel Committee of the Presbytery, or other similar committee, where this role has been delegated to them by the Presbytery.
 - 5.3. At least two members of the relevant Kirk Session must be present at the interview.
 - 5.4. The Board of Ministry shall provide all Presbyteries with appropriate interview questions and guidance.
6. At its Ordinary Meeting, the Presbytery shall take up consideration of the Applicant and the Application Form. It shall be moved, seconded and agreed that the Applicant can proceed to the next stage of the process if the Presbytery decide the Applicant is suitable.
 - 6.1. The Presbytery will receive the report of the interview committee with their recommendations.
 - 6.2. The Applicant shall appear before the whole Presbytery and any further questions can be put to him by any member of the Presbytery.
 - 6.3. The Applicant will be asked to leave the room and the Presbytery will then decide on whether his Application will be approved and recommended for consideration by the Board of Ministry.
 - 6.4. The Presbytery shall come to a decision on the approval of the application by way of a suitable motion recording their approval of the Application.
 - 6.5. The Presbytery shall inform the Applicant of progress with his application no later than seven days after the decision is taken.
7. The Presbytery must inform the Board of Ministry of any successful applications within seven days of approving an application, and they shall pass on all relevant documents to the Board at this time.
8. The Applicant will be required to attend an Assessment Day.
 - 8.1. Assessment Days shall be organised by the Board of Ministry.
 - 8.2. The Board of Ministry, and several others appointed by them, will assess Applicants' suitability for Ministry.
 - 8.3. At least one female assessor shall be present at each Assessment Day.
 - 8.4. Assessment Days will take place as required.
- 8.5. The Board of Ministry or Representatives of the Board will conduct an interview with the Applicant during or shortly after the Assessment Day.
9. After the Assessment Day and Interview, a Report will come to the Board of Ministry.
 - 9.1. The Board of Ministry shall come to a decision on whether the Applicant is a suitable Candidate for Free Church Ministry. They shall also assess his training requirements in the context of becoming a suitable person to be licensed for Ministry.
 - 9.2. The Board of Ministry shall inform the Applicant of their decision regarding his candidacy within seven days of the next Board meeting. This must be in writing.
 - 9.3. If the Applicant is accepted as a Candidate for the ministry, the Board of Ministry must inform the Applicant and the Presbytery of their decision regarding the training requirements within twenty one days. This must be in writing.

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10. When an Applicant is married then due consideration for his wife must be taken at every stage of the Application Process

10.1. The Board of Ministry shall ensure that the Application Form includes a section for wives to complete.

10.2. Wives should also attend the Assessment Day where possible.

SECTION C - Application Form

The Board of Ministry hold the responsibility for creating an Application Form and providing interview questions for Presbyteries.

1. The Board of Ministry shall create an Application Form to be used for Applicants for Free Church Ministry.

1.1. The Board of Ministry shall create Regulations to govern the content of the Application Form.

1.2. The General Assembly reserves the right to review the Application Form and any Regulations related to the Application Form.

1.3. The content of the Application form must comply with civil legislation.

1.4. The Application Form shall be reviewed by the Board of Ministry on a yearly basis.

2. The Board of Ministry shall create an Application Information Sheet to be released with the Application Form.

2.1. The Application Information Sheet will detail how to complete the Application Form and provide information on the process to become a Candidate for Free Church Ministry.

3. The Board of Ministry shall create interview questions to be used by Presbytery during the Application process, including questions regarding sensitive information, and provide these to each Presbytery.

3.1 The Board of Ministry shall create Regulations to govern the content of the interview questions.

3.2 The General Assembly reserves the right to review the interview questions and any Regulations related to the interview questions.

3.3 The interview questions shall be reviewed by the Board of Ministry on a yearly basis.

4. Retention of Records

4.1 The Board of Ministry is responsible for storing all information gathered during the Application Process in a manner that complies with civil law.

SECTION D - Decisions on Route to Ministry

Upon offering Candidacy to an Applicant, the Board of Ministry shall devise a study plan for each candidate. The Board of Ministry will arrange this study plan in conjunction with Edinburgh Theological Seminary.

1. All Candidates should complete the full course of study available to Edinburgh Theological Seminary and achieve a pass of the BTh.

2. All Candidates must complete the Presbyterian Church Ministry Module and attend Preaching Seminars as required by the Board of Ministry before being licensed.

3. Exceptions to the requirement for all candidates to complete the full BTh can be made in particular circumstances:

3.1 When the Candidate has already completed theological studies, he may be required to undertake courses at ETS at the discretion of the Board of Ministry.

3.2 ETS shall devise an examination which will assist the Board of Ministry in assessing the Candidate's knowledge if he has already completed theological study.

3.3 The Board of Ministry can in exceptional circumstances waive the requirement to study the Biblical languages.

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4. The Board of Ministry shall publish a Candidate Information Guide in conjunction with ETS each academic year. This shall be distributed by the Board of Ministry to all Candidates at the beginning of each academic year.

SECTION E - Support for Free Church Ministry Candidates

Free Church Candidates have a responsibility to live a life above reproach, suitable of that of a Minister of the Gospel and must make themselves available for mentoring and accountability.

1. Every Candidate will be provided with a mentor by Presbytery. The mentor will typically be a member of that Presbytery.

1.1 Mentors shall contact their assigned Candidate at least twice per semester.

1.2 Mentors shall discuss matters of personal and professional development with the Candidate.

1.3 All discussions between Mentor and their assigned Candidate shall take place in strict confidence unless a safeguarding issue is disclosed, or any matter that may call into question the integrity of the Candidate and their suitability for Ministry.

1.4 The Board of Ministry are responsible for ensuring that Mentors are in place and that Mentors are in contact with their assigned Candidate at least twice per Semester.

2. ETS shall appoint a Director of Studies to each Candidate.

2.1. The Director of Studies shall send a report to Presbytery and the Board of Ministry on the Candidate's academic progress at the end of each academic year.

2.2. The Director of Studies should also report on any other issues that have arisen over the course of the year.

2.3. If any issues regarding the academic progress of a Candidate emerge during the year the Director of Studies shall report this to Presbytery and the Board of Ministry as soon as is practicable.

3. The Board of Ministry reserve the right to hold a meeting with a Candidate at any point.

3.1. The Board of Ministry can use such meetings to discuss any matter regarding the progress of the Candidate.

3.2. The Candidate may bring a friend or their Mentor to any of these meetings (such a friend should be a communicant member in the Free Church or another Christian church).

3.3. The Board of Ministry shall bring any concerns regarding a Candidate to the Presbytery as soon as is practicable.

3.4. At the end of each academic year the Board of Ministry shall report to Presbytery on each Candidate's progress.

4. The local congregation where the candidate is serving shall send a report to Presbytery and the Board of Ministry on the Candidate's involvement with the local congregation at the end of each academic year.

4.1. Where this is a training congregation, details of training undertaken by the candidate should be provided in the report.

5. At the end of each academic year, Presbytery shall certify that the Candidate is able to continue in his role.

5.1. They shall review all information received from the Board of Ministry, the local congregation and ETS on the Candidate's Progress.

5.2. They will interview the Candidate and discuss matters related to his Candidacy and continued suitability for ministry.

5.3. If any particular issues are raised by a Candidate's Mentor, Accountability Partner, Director of Studies or the Board of Ministry these will be discussed with the Candidate.

5.4. In their assessment of the Candidate, the Presbytery shall satisfy themselves as far as possible that the Candidate is a suitable person to sign the Formula.

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5.5. The Presbytery will issue a certificate, before the commencement of the ensuing academic year, to the Candidate, ETS and the Board of Ministry to certify his continued status as a Candidate.

6. A Candidate is under the pastoral oversight of the Presbytery of the Congregation in which he is a Communicant Member.

SECTION F - Ending a Candidacy

1. The candidacy shall be kept under review by the Presbytery and the Board of Ministry. This review may on occasions lead to the conclusion that there are potential grounds to end the candidacy.

2. If the ETS Senate has cause for concern about a candidate, they shall report this to the Presbytery and the Board as soon as possible.

3. Prior to the commencement of a formal process of terminating the candidacy, the Presbytery and the Board shall seek to help the Candidate to resolve the problems leading to concerns over their suitability as a candidate for the ministry.

4. Should such efforts fail to resolve the situation, a review committee will be established comprising three members of the Presbytery and three members of the Board of Ministry. The Board's representatives shall include the Chairman who will also act as Convener of the Review Committee.

5. The Review Committee shall have powers to interview the Candidate, to arrange support for the Candidate, and to recommend to the Presbytery to terminate the candidacy should the concerns raised regarding the candidacy be confirmed.

6. The candidate shall be given every opportunity to find a resolution of the problem.

6.1. The Committee shall consult with the ETS Senate and receive a report from them on the Candidate's progress, character and suitability as a candidate for the ministry.

6.2. The Committee shall consult with the Minister of the candidate's training Church, where he is on a Minister-in-Training programme.

6.3. The Committee shall consult with the Board and receive a report from them on their oversight and examination of the Candidate.

6.4. The Review Committee shall consider the candidacy and the problems that have arisen, taking cognisance of the Senate's report, the Board's report, and the record of the Presbytery's previous deliberations on the matter, before proceeding to interview the Candidate.

6.5. The Candidate shall be invited to appear before the Review Committee, accompanied by a friend or his mentor, to address the concerns that have been raised and to seek a solution. The process may require more than one meeting with the Candidate before a final recommendation is made.

6.6. The Candidate shall leave the room before the Committee considers the details of the interview and come to a recommendation on the matter.

7. Should the Review Committee find that the potential grounds for terminating the candidacy have been confirmed by the review process, they shall report to the Presbytery and the Board accordingly, with their conclusions and recommendations. The Committee shall also inform the candidate of their conclusions and recommendations.

8. The Presbytery will meet to reach a final decision on the Committee's recommendation.

8.1. The Candidate and a representative of the Board of Ministry will have a right to address the Presbytery before the Presbytery reaches its decision.

8.2. The Candidate shall leave the room before the Presbytery considers the details of the recommendation on the matter.

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- 8.3. The Candidate and the Board of Ministry will be informed of the final decision in writing within 7 days.
- 8.4. The Presbytery in consultation with the Board will ensure that suitable pastoral support is made available to the Candidate.
9. Any decision made by the Presbytery regarding ongoing candidacy can be appealed by the Candidate to the General Assembly or one of its Commissions within 10 days of receiving the written decision.
10. The Chairman of the Board of Ministry will also have a right to appeal the decision of the Presbytery to the General Assembly or one of its Commissions, within 10 days of receiving the written decision, where the proper procedure has not been followed or relevant information has been disregarded by the Presbytery.

SECTION G - Repeals

The General Assembly repeal the following Acts: Section 1 of Act 19, Class 2, 2016; Act 38, Class 2, 2015; Act 48, Class 2, 2012; and Act 37, Class 2, 2012.

The General Assembly met in private

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

3.1. The Finding – Rev. Dr Cory Brock. It was moved, seconded, and agreed that:

1. The General Assembly receive the application for the Free Church ministry from Rev. Dr Cory Brock. 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. Dr Cory Brock 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 public

3.2. The Formula. Dr Brock was called before the General Assembly and the decision of the Assembly was communicated to him by the Moderator. On giving satisfactory answers to the Questions, Dr Brock signed the Formula according to the process set out in Act 4, Class 2, 2020, Paragraph 2. The Moderator formally welcomed Dr Brock to the Free Church of Scotland after which the Moderator called on Rev. Donald G. Macdonald to lead in prayer.

4. Appointments. The General Assembly took up consideration of appointments arising from its business in all the Assembly Sessions.

4.1 Judicial Commission. The General Assembly noted with concern that Rev. Roddie Rankin is enduring a prolonged period of ill-health and called on Commissioners to remember him in prayer. It was moved, seconded, and agreed to that Rev. Colin L. Macleod be appointed to the Judicial Commission as a representative for the Presbytery of Skye and Wester Ross to replace Rev. Roddie Rankin.

4.2 Committee – Establishment Principle. It was moved, seconded, and agreed that a committee be appointed as follows to report on the Establishment Principle and its relevance in the 21st Century: Rev. Dr John S. Ross (Convener), Rev. James Maciver, Rev. Gordon Matheson, Rev. Nigel Anderson, Rev. Andrew Longwe, Mr Neil D.M. Macleod (St Columba's, Edinburgh), and the Public Engagement Coordinator, ex officio.

4.3 Public Engagement Coordinator. It was moved, seconded, and agreed that Rev. Stephen Allison, be appointed to the position of the Church's Public Engagement Coordinator.

4.4 Northern Presbytery Assessors. It was moved, seconded, and agreed that the following be appointed as General Assessors to the Northern Presbytery with the appointments to terminate at the 2023 General Assembly: Rev. Alasdair M. Macleod, Minister at Smithton and Culloden, Rev. Rory Stott, Minister at Fortrose, Mr Iain A. Macdonald, Elder at Greyfriars Inverness, and Mr Angus Mackay, Elder at Dingwall and Strathpeffer.

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5. Appointment of Commission of Assembly. The General Assembly hereby appoint a Commission consisting of all the members of this General Assembly along with Rev. Derek Lamont named by the Moderator to be their Commission.

1. *Meetings.* This Commission is appointed to meet at Edinburgh on Tuesday 5th October 2021 and on Tuesday 1st March 2022 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 terms of Act 33, Class 2, 2010, and Act 4, Class 2, 2020 should there be restrictions on in-person meetings at the time.

1.2. *Virtual Meetings.* The General Assembly declare that it shall be competent to meet virtually with the use of audio-visual technology, under the terms of the above-mentioned Acts of Assembly, at the discretion of the Moderator and the Assembly Clerk in consultation with the Assembly Business Committee.

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

1.4. *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.

1.5. *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.

1.6. *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 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 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 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.

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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 to receive applications from the Mission Board as follows.

5.1 *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.

5.2 *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.

5.3 *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.

7.1 *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.

7.2 *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.

6. **Protestation.** Protestations were called for, but none was given.

7. **Appointing the 2022 General Assembly.** The General Assembly appoint the next General Assembly to meet on Monday 23rd May 2022 at 6.00pm. The Assembly empower the Moderator and the Assembly Clerk, in consultation with the Assembly Business Committee, to alter the date should this date not coincide with the Church of Scotland Assembly.

8. **Thanks.** The thanks of the General Assembly were accorded to the Moderator, the retiring Moderator, the Assembly Clerks, Mrs Sharon Fraser and the Office Staff, Rev. Thomas Davis and Mr Ali Oliver and St. Columba's AV Team.

9. **Minutes of 4th and 5th Session.** The Minutes of the 4th and 5th Session were adjusted and approved.

10. **Closure.** The General Assembly was closed with prayer and the Apostolic Benediction.

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**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS
OF THE COMMISSION OF ASSEMBLY
OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
HELD via ZOOM AUDIO -VISUAL TECHNOLOGY
WEDNESDAY 3RD MARCH 2021**

1. Constitute. Using Zoom audio-visual technology, on Wednesday 3rd March 2021, which day a quorum of the Commission appointed by last General Assembly being met, Rev. Donald G. Macdonald, Moderator of the 2020 General Assembly was called to the Chair, and the meeting was constituted with devotional exercises.

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 21, Class 2, 2020*.

3. Admission of Letter. The Principal Clerk gave notification of a letter submitted from Rev. Garry Brotherston and Mr Alasdair Smith, Elder at Knox Free Church, Perth, regarding the Report and Proposed Deliverance of the Board of Trustees. The Commission of Assembly agreed to admit the letter into Commission papers in fairness to its signatories and proceeded to consider the contents of the letter and its request that:

‘the Commission of Assembly to not approve this deliverance and to simply depart from the matter, carrying it forward to the full General Assembly in May, at which time, the will of the Church may be appropriately discerned through the proper channels of brotherly discussion and collegial debate.’

The Principal Clerk presented the letter to the Commission of Assembly, explaining its contents, commenting on the key points raised in it, and highlighting the fact that the Proposed Deliverance of the Board’s Report does not ask the Commission to declare the Free Church’s position on the judicial review. The Commission recorded with gratitude the attendance of fifty-two Commissioners at the meeting.

It was therefore moved, seconded and agreed that the Commission of Assembly note the letter with its contents, and proceed to take up the Report of the Board of Trustees. The Principal Clerk was instructed to respond to the letter, explaining the decision of the Commission.

4. Board of Trustees – COVID-19 Group

The Commission of Assembly called for the Report of the Board of Trustees regarding the current coronavirus pandemic and the Board’s COVID-19 Group. The report was presented by Rev. David Meredith, member of the Board of Trustees.

3.1 First Motion. It was moved and seconded in the following terms:

1. The Commission of Assembly thank the Board of Trustees COVID-19 Group for its services to the Church during the coronavirus pandemic and the direction it has taken at a time when Scottish Government COVID-19 restrictions have once more closed churches for public worship.

2. The Commission of Assembly recognise the closure of churches at this time as a necessary element of the latest public health measures put in place by the Scottish Government in their effort to control the virus, prevent our health services becoming overwhelmed, and limit the loss of life. They give thanks to the Lord for the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out and pray that this programme, together with the public health restrictions, will accelerate the return of the country to normality.

3. The Commission of Assembly declare that the Free Church of Scotland has no role in the pre-action letter written and signed by 27 church leaders on 15th January 2021, claiming that closure of churches in Scotland has led to the criminalising of public worship, or in the subsequent action which has resulted in them being granted a judicial review of this aspect of the Scottish Government’s policy. They further declare that Free Church Ministers or Office-bearers who have supported the said action are expressing their personal views and that they are not representative of the Church’s position on the matter.

3.2 Second Motion. It was moved and seconded that Paragraph 3 of the Proposed Deliverance be deleted and replaced by the following:

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The Commission of Assembly declare that those ministers and officer-bearers who signed the letter of 15th January 2021 claiming that closure of churches in Scotland has led to the criminalising of public worship, or who are party to a judicial review of this aspect of the Scottish Government's policy, did so in a personal capacity only.

3.3 Third Motion. It was moved and seconded that the first sentence of Paragraph 2 of the Proposed Deliverance be deleted and replaced by the following:

The Commission of Assembly recognise that the intention of the Scottish Government in closing churches at this time is to control the virus, prevent our health services being overwhelmed and limit the loss of life.

3.4 Fourth Motion. It was also moved and seconded that Paragraph 4 be added to the Proposed Deliverance in the following terms:

The Commission of Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees COVID-19 Group to make representations to the Scottish Government to prioritise the re-opening of churches as part of the easing of lockdown restrictions, given the importance of gathered worship to the wellbeing of our members. The Board of Trustees will publish on the Free Church website this representation to the Government for the sake of transparency.

3.5 The Finding. With the permission of the Commission of Assembly, Mr Meredith accepted the third motion and the fourth motion. On a vote being taken between the second motion and the first motion, the first motion was carried. The finding of the Commission of Assembly was as follows:

1. The Commission of Assembly thank the Board of Trustees COVID-19 Group for its services to the Church during the coronavirus pandemic and the direction it has taken at a time when Scottish Government COVID-19 restrictions have once more closed churches for public worship.
2. The Commission of Assembly recognise that the intention of the Scottish Government in closing churches at this time is to control the virus, prevent our health services being overwhelmed and limit the loss of life. They give thanks to the Lord for the COVID-19 vaccine roll out and pray that this programme, together with the public health restrictions, will accelerate the return of the country to normality.
3. The Commission of Assembly declare that the Free Church of Scotland has no role in the pre-action letter written and signed by 27 church leaders on 15th January 2021, claiming that closure of churches in Scotland has led to the criminalising of public worship, or in the subsequent action which has resulted in them being granted a judicial review of this aspect of the Scottish Government's policy. They further declare that Free Church Ministers or Office-bearers who have supported the said action are expressing their personal views and that they are not representative of the Church's position on the matter.
4. The Commission of Assembly instruct the Board of Trustees COVID-19 Group to make representations to the Scottish Government to prioritise the re-opening of churches as part of the easing of lockdown restrictions, given the importance of gathered worship to the wellbeing of our members. They declare that Board of Trustees will publish on the Free Church website this representation to the Government for the sake of transparency.

The Commission of Assembly met in Private Session

5. Business Committee Report

The Commission of Assembly called for the Report of the Business Committee on the following documents from the Northern Presbytery submitted for the attention of the Commission of Assembly in relation to the Presbytery's decision not to take Mr Iain R. Morrison on trials for licence: (1) Reasons for Dissent and Complaint; (2) Presbytery Responses to Reasons; (3) Petition in lieu of Appeal from Mr Iain R. Morrison.

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

4.1.1 General

1. The Commission of Assembly receive and adopt the Report and thank the Business Committee.

1. The Commission of Assembly note the declaration of interest stated by the Principal Clerk and the Assistant Clerk, Rev. Stephen Allison. They declare that the Principal Clerk and Mr Allison shall not participate in the discussions and debate over the substance of all the submitted documents, or in any voting arising from discussions on them, either at the General Assembly or its Commissions, but that they shall be available to give advice on procedure as required.

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2. The Commission of Assembly declare that Rev. Nigel Anderson, Assistant Clerk, shall take the place of the Principal Clerk at the General Assembly or its Commissions when the substance of the documents is under discussion.

3. The Commission of Assembly note the declaration of interest of the Presbytery of the Western Isles having previously processed and turned down Mr Morrison's application to be taken on trials for licence. They declare that the Presbytery of the Western Isles may participate in discussion and debate on the substance of the documents but shall not vote on any matters arising from discussions, either at the General Assembly or its Commissions.

4.1.2 Admission of Papers

1. The Commission of Assembly declare that the Reasons for Dissent and Complaint document submitted by members of the Northern Presbytery, the Northern Presbytery's Response to Reasons document, and the Petition from Mr Iain R. Morrison, be received by the Commission of Assembly as admissible and acceptable for their specific purposes and aims.

2. The Commission of Assembly declare that the Reasons for Dissent and Complaint document submitted by members of the Northern Presbytery, the Northern Presbytery's Response to Reasons document, and the Petition from Mr Iain R. Morrison, be taken up by the Commission together in the light of the fact that they are addressing the same matter.

3. The Commission of Assembly declare that the whole matter be taken up in private session and that the relevant documents be read to Commissioners during the private session and questions answered on the supporting documents and appendices as required.

4.1.3 Business

1. The Commission of Assembly appoint a committee to examine all the documents submitted from the Northern Presbytery regarding the Presbytery's decision not to take Mr Iain R. Morrison on trials for licence, and to investigate the matters of concern contained therein, comprising Rev. Derek Lamont, St Columba's Edinburgh, Rev. Daniel Sladek, ETS, Rev. Andrew Longwe, Cumbernauld, Rev. Colin L. Macleod, Gairloch and Kinlochewe, Rev. Rory Stott, Fortrose, Mr Andrew Murchison, Glenurquhart and Fort Augustus, Mr Iain K. Macleod, Coatbridge, and Mrs Fiona Cameron, Glasgow and Argyll, as Clerk and Adviser, with Mr Lamont as Convener.

2. The Commission of Assembly declare remit of the Committee as follows:

- To examine the Reasons submitted by the Complainants.
- To examine the Responses to Reasons submitted by the Presbytery.
- To examine the Petition submitted by Mr Iain R. Morrison along with its supporting appendices.
- To examine, as required, the papers and reports which before the Northern Presbytery on Tuesday 16th February 2021.
- To interview as required all parties associated with, or have an interest in, the Reasons, the Responses to Reasons, and the Petition as mentioned above.
- To report to the May 2021 General Assembly on their findings and with recommendations.

3. The Commission of Assembly further declare that the Committee has the rights of Church Courts in cases of Dissent and Complaint & Appeal to access documents and to interview all parties in fulfilling its remit without any prejudice to the rights of parties to be heard at the Bar of the General Assembly.

4. The Commission of Assembly instruct the Principal Clerk to issue an extract minute of proceedings to all parties to inform them of the agreed course of action regarding their individual submissions.

The Commission of Assembly met in Open Session

6. **Minutes.** The Minutes of the meeting were read and approved.

7. **Close.** There being no further business, the meeting was closed with prayer.