Record of Assembly 2022

The United Reformed Church

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Contents

Matters for consideration and action..... 4

General Assembly minutes..... 5

Church closures..... 38

Jubilee ministers, 2020-2021..... 66

Nominations..... 67

Resolutions index..... 85

Matters for consideration and action from General Assembly 2022

The list of General Assembly resolutions below are of particular relevance to local churches, Synods and ministers, and ought to be taken note of and where necessary acted upon.

Local churches
The following resolutions are particularly relevant:
2 Mental health first aid training
4 URC Children
8 One off payments to ministers and lay staff
15 Confidentiality Policy
16 Reinvigorating the ecumenical vision of the United Reformed Church
17 URC Environmental Policy
18 Korea peace appeal
19 Mission enabling fund
20 Legacies of slavery
25 Changes to the Structure of the URC and Rules of Procedure regarding Safeguarding
52 UK Asylum Policy

Synods
The following resolutions are particularly relevant:
2 Mental health first aid training
4 URC Children
8 One off payments to ministers and lay staff
15 Confidentiality Policy
16 Reinvigorating the ecumenical vision of the United Reformed Church
17 URC Environmental Policy
18 Korea peace appeal
19 Mission enabling fund
20 Legacies of slavery
24 Changes to the Basis of Union and Structure of the URC
25 Changes to the Structure of the URC and Rules of Procedure regarding Safeguarding
55 Marks of ministry of a lay pioneer

Ministers
The following resolutions are particularly relevant:
8 One off payments to ministers and lay staff
9 Retired ministers' benevolent fund
11-13 Pensions
29-36,40-45 Ministerial Discipline Process

Minutes of a meeting of the United Reformed Church General Assembly

on Friday 8 July 2022

The Assembly met through a hybrid arrangement of an in person meeting at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire and by video conferencing.

The Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship), the Revd Adrian Bulley, welcomed members, laid the Roll of Assembly on the table, and invited the Moderator to constitute the Assembly with prayer. The Moderator, the Revd Clare Downing, duly constituted Assembly. The Moderator explained that the General Secretary was temporarily unavailable because of a family emergency.

Roll of Assembly 2022

Moderators
1. The Revd Clare Downing

Clerk
2. The Revd Michael Hopkins

Assistant Clerk
3. The Revd Sarah Moore

General Secretary
4. The Revd Dr John Bradbury

Deputy General Secretary (Administration and Resources)
5. Mrs Jane Baird

Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship)
6. The Revd Adrian Bulley

Deputy General Secretary (Mission)
7. The Revd Philip Brooks

Conveners of General Assembly Standing Committeees, (except the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee)
8. Business Committee – The Revd Mark Robinson
9. Children's and Youth Work – The Revd Samantha Sheehan (Acting)
10. Communications – The Revd Dr Peter Stevenson
11. Education and Learning – Mr Alan Yates
12. Equalities – The Revd Anne Lewitt
13. Faith and Order – The Revd Dr Robert Pope
14. Finance – Mr Ian Hardie (Treasurer)
15. The Deptuty Treasurer – Mr Vaughan Griffiths
16. Ministries – The Revd Paul Whittle
17. Mission – Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte
18. Nominations – Mrs Helen Lidgett

Convener of the United Reformed Church Trust
19. Mrs Val Morrison

Immediate past Moderators
20. Mr Derek Estill
21. The Revd Nigel Uden

Former Moderators (two places)
22. The Revd John Marsh
23. The Revd Dr Elizabeth Welch

Resource Centres for Learning
24. Northern College Staff – The Revd Dr Rosalind Selby
25. Northern College Student – Ms Karen Jones
26. Scottish College Staff – The Revd Dr John McNeil Scott
27. Scottish College Student – Mrs Margaret Higton
28. Westminster College Staff – The Revd Dr Rick Mearkle
29. Westminster College Student – Mrs Stephanie Atkins

United Reformed Church Youth (three places)
30. Youth Assembly Moderator – Miss Jo Harris
31. Youth Assembly Moderator Elect – Miss Philippa Osei
32. Youth Assembly GA/AE rep – Miss Laura Everard

United Reformed Church Chaplain to HM Forces (one place)
33. Vacant

Northern Synod
(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).

34. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Dave Herbert
35. The Synod Clerk – Ms Melanie Campbell
36. The Revd Joan Grindrod Helmn
37. The Revd Dr Trevor Jamison
38. The Revd Peter Rand
39. Mrs Susan Rand
40. Mrs Maureen Shepherd
41. Ms Louise Sanders
42. Ms Pat Poinen
43. Vacant
44. Vacant
45. Vacant
46. Vacant
47. Vacant
48. Vacant
49. Vacant

North Western Synod
(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).

50. The Synod Clerk – Tim Hopley
51. The Revd Mike Aspinall
52. The Revd Martyn Coe
53. The Revd Jonnie Hill
54. The Revd Alison Termie
55. The Revd Mike Walsh
56. The Revd Ruth Watson
57. The Revd Adam Woodhouse
58. Mrs Barbara Aspinall
59. Mr Edward Hoddinott-Leighton
60. Mr Aftab Mughal
61. Mrs Fozia Mughal
62. Mr John Skipworth
63. Ms Pauline Taylor
64. Ms Jadan Turner (under 26)
65. Vacant

Mersey Synod
(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).

66. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Geoff Felton
67. The Synod Clerk – Ms Rita Griffiths
68. The Revd Jeff Hughes
69. The Revd Dr Nick Jones
70. The Revd Catherine McFie
71. The Revd Ruth Wilson
72. Mrs Pat Cansfield
73. Mr Paul Franklin
74. Mrs Pauline Green
75. Mrs Heather Hughes
76. Mrs Trish Kuypers
77. Dr Keith Reading
78. Mrs Jean Taylor
79. Mrs Chris Williams
80. Vacant
81. Vacant

Yorkshire Synod
(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment)

82. The Synod Moderator –The Revd Jamie Kissack
83. The Synod Clerk – Mr Tim Crossley
84. The Revd Fran Kissack
85. The Revd Steven Knapton
86. The Revd Sarah Fitton
87. Mrs Margaret Knapton
88. Mr Dan Morrell (under 26)
89. Mr Rod Morrison
90. Mrs Jenny Poulter
91. Mr Daniel Raddings (under 26)

92. Miss Lydia Raddings (under 26)
93. Mrs Terasa Raddings
94. Mrs Clare Westgarth
95. Mr Kai Weynberg (under 26)
96. Ms Megan Westgarth (under 26)
97. The Revd Zaidie Orr

East Midlands Synod
(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).

98. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Geoffrey Clarke
99. The Synod Clerk – The Revd Camilla Veitch
100. The Synod Treasurer – Mr David Greatorex
101. The Revd Martin Ferris
102. The Revd Graham Maskery
103. The Revd Sue Powell
104. The Revd Samuel Silungwe
105. The Revd Jane Wade
106. Mrs Margaret Davies
107. Mrs Alison Hadley
108. Mrs Maggie Kirkbride
109. Miss Ella Lemon (under 26)
110. Mrs Vicky Longbone
111. Mr Peter Rippon
112. Miss Rebecca Smith (under 26)
113. Mrs Barbara Turner

West Midlands Synod
(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).

114. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Steve Faber
115. The Synod Clerk – Mrs Rachel Wakeman
116. The Synod Treasurer – Mr Steve Powell
117. The Revd Dr Ash Barker
118. The Revd Debbie Brown
119. The Revd Elaine Hutchinson
120. The Revd Andrew Mann-Ray
121. The Revd Graham Sweeney
122. Mr John Fletcher
123. Ms Kati Haynes
124. Mrs Julie Jefferies
125. Mr Leon Karatekin (under 26)
126. Ms Kirsty-Ann Mabott
127. Vacant
128. Vacant
129. Vacant

Eastern Synod
(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).

130. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Lythan Nevard
131. The Synod Clerk – Mr Keir Hounsome
132. The Revd Dr Catherine Ball
133. The Revd Bruno Boldrini
134. The Revd Alex Clare-Young
135. The Revd Paul Ellis
136. The Revd Anne Sardeson
137. The Revd Barnabas Shin
138. The Revd Paul Stein
139. Ms Lindsey Brown
140. Mr Gil Heathcote
141. Mrs Maria Lee
142. Mr Richard Lewney
143. Mrs Joan Smith
144. Mr Brandon Stein (under 26)
145. Vacant

South Western Synod
(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).

146. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Ruth Whitehead
147. The Synod Treasurer – The Revd Richard Gray
148. The Synod Clerk – Ms Rachel Leach
149. The Revd Sue Cossey
150. The Revd Dr Hazel Starrit
151. The Revd Robert Weston
152. The Revd Mark Woodhouse
153. Mrs Janet Gray
154. Mr Tony Langmead
155. Mrs Janet Raven
156. Ms Marie Trubic
157. Mrs Beverley Wride
158. Vacant
159. Vacant
160. Vacant
161. Vacant

Wessex Synod
(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).

162. The Synod Clerk – Miss Karen Bell
163. The Revd Tim Clarke
164. The Revd Dr Sarah Hall
165. The Revd Timothy Meachin
166. The Revd Dr Romilly Micklem

167. The Revd Glyn Millington
168. The Revd Ray Stanyon
169. Mrs Jill Abrahams
170. Miss Sheilagh Courtnage
171. Mrs Linda Jackson
172. Mrs Bridget Micklem
173. Mr David North
174. Mr Clive Snashall
175. Miss Maya Withall (under 26)
176. Vacant
177. Vacant

Thames North Synod
(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).

178. The Synod Moderator – The Revd George Watt
179. The Synod Clerk – Ms Nneoma Chima
180. The Synod Treasurer – Mr Tony Obi-Ezekpazu
181. The Revd Yufen Chen
182. The Revd Jim Gascoigne
183. The Revd Anthony Howells
184. The Revd Shahbaz Javed
185. The Revd Sujeeth Kumar
186. The Revd Noble Samuel
187. Mr Tony Corfe
188. Mrs Hilda Darkwah
189. Mr Olateju (Lola) Fatogun
190. Mrs Ola Lawal
191. Ms Aaliyah Stewart (under 26)
192. The Revd Sally Thomas
193. Vacant

Southern Synod
(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).

194. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Bridget Banks
195. The Synod Treasurer – Mr John Denison
196. The Revd Bernard Fidder
197. The Revd John Grundy
198. The Revd Martin Knight
199. The Revd Kim Plumpton
200. The Revd Angela Rigby
201. The Revd Helen Warmington
202. Mrs Carol Clack
203. Mrs Marie Jackson
204. Mr Alan Kirby
205. Ms Heather Moore (under 26)
206. Miss Mercy Nimako

207. Miss Pamela Tolhurst
208. Vacant
209. Vacant

National Synod of Wales
(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).

210. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Simon Walkling
211. The Revd Dr Jason Askew
212. The Revd David Dean
213. The Revd John Hayton
214. The Revd Stella Hayton
215. The Revd Martha McInnes
216. The Revd David Salsbury
217. The Revd Martin Spain
218. The Revd Dr Phil Wall
219. Mrs Judy Harris
220. Mrs Adella Pritchard
221. Mrs Christine Roberts
222. Mr Peter Roberts
223. Mr Mathias Tchatchoua
224. Vacant
225. Vacant

National Synod of Scotland
(16 places – at least five of which shall be Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Church Related Community Workers, and at least five of which shall be Elders or "lay". Any two within the 16 places are reserved for represenatives aged under 26 at the time of appointment).

226. The Synod Moderator – The Revd Paul Whittle
227. The Synod Clerk – Revd Jan Adamson
228. The Revd John Bremner
229. The Revd Dr Mitchell Bunting
230. The Revd Steven Manders
231. The Revd Helen Mee
232. The Revd Lindsay Sanderson
233. Miss Morag Donaldson
234. Dr Ewen Harley
235. Mr Derek McDonald
236. Mrs Lorna McDonald
237. Ms Morag McLintock
238. Miss Myra Rose
239. Vacant
240. Vacant
241. Vacant

British and Irish Ecumenical representatives (five places)
242. The Revd Dr Iain Greenshields (Church of Scotland)
243. The Revd Canon Sarah Gower (Church of England)
244. The Revd Dr Leao Neto (Methodist Church of Great Britain)
245. Bishop Mike Royal (Churches Together England)
246. Mrs Yvonne Campbell (Congregational Federation)

International Ecumenical representatives (five places)
247. Pfarrer Martin Henninger, Evangelische Kirche der Pfalz
248. Vacant
249. Vacant
250. Vacant
251. Vacant

Council for World Mission (one place)
252. Vacant

Worship
Opening worship was led by the Moderator's Chaplain, the Revd Helen Everard, and included a celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, the inductions of the Revd Andy Braunston as Minister for Digital Worship and the Revd Philip Brooks as Deputy General Secretary (Mission), as well as an Act of Commemoration for Ministers, Missionaries, Church Related Community Workers, and former Moderators and Clerks who had died since the last Assembly:

Ministers and Missionaries:
David Allen
Eric Stanley Allen
Harold David Bignell
Michael Thomas Bond
William John Boyd
Basil Ernest Bridge
Vernon Anthony David Broomfield-Payne
Frederick John Carrier
Thomas Arnold Carmichael
Angela Samantha Caton
Ruth Ann Crofton
Roy Arthur James Eames
Edmund Fallows
Donald James Finnan
James Williams Forster
John Kenneth Gardiner
Colin Roy Garwood
Thomas Pryde Heggie
John Griffiths Hetherington
John Huntington
Alistair Marshall Low Hutcheson
R Stewart Hynd
Stella Gwendoline Jones
Margaret Juhasz
Ronald Hugh Lewis
Samuel Arthur Madin
John Wilson McMinn
Patrick Edmund James McManus
David Wilfred Moss
David Homer Morris
Susan Margaret Nuttall
Paul William Pells
John Rammell
Margaret Thornton Taylor
Alan Edward Thomasson
Geoffrey Knipe Tolley
Adrian John Wells
John Nevile Whitehorn
Samuel Lewis Williams

Moderator:
Peter Pay

Session one

The Moderator introduced the platform party to Assembly.

The Revd Michael Hopkins, presented the following papers with their Resolutions En bloc:

A1 Mission Council Advisory Groups (**Resolution 6**).

1: Minutes
The Clerk, the Revd Dr Michael Hopkins, moved the following resolutions:

Resolution 46
General Assembly sends its good wishes to the Revd Ken Forbes, and offers him prayers for a speedy recovery.

Agreed

Resolution 47
General Assembly appoints the Revd Andy Braunston as Minutes Secretary for this meeting.

Agreed

2: Election of Moderator of the General Assembly 2023-24
The Clerk moved the following resolutions:

Resolution 48
General Assembly appoints the Revd Camilla Veitch (Convener), the Revd Samuel Silungwe, and Mr Dan Morrell as tellers for the election of Moderator of the General Assembly 2023-24.

Agreed

3: Tellers for any counted votes during the Assembly
The Clerk moved the following resolution:

Resolution 49
General Assembly appoints Mr David Greatorex as Convener of Tellers for the 2022 General Assembly.

Agreed

4: Facilitation Group
The Clerk moved the following resolution:

Resolution 50
General Assembly appoints the Revd Elaine Hutchinson, Rod Morrison, Lindsey Brown, Pat Poinen, the Revd Dr John McNeil Scott, and Paul Franklin as a Facilitation Group for this meeting of General Assembly.

Agreed

5: Membership of General Assembly

The Clerk explained that an unforeseen consequence of moving the induction of the Moderator of General Assembly to the end of Assembly was that the Moderator-elect was not automatically a member of the Assembly at which they would be inducted. General Assembly can add roles to its membership by a single vote under category 2(6)(g). The following was, therefore, proposed:

Resolution 51

General Assembly resolves that the Moderator-elect of the General Assembly be a member of General Assembly.

Agreed

6: Synod Moderators report

The Revd Steve Faber presented the report of the Synod Moderators. Assembly broke into small groups to discuss aspects of the report. Assembly thanked the Synod Moderators for their report.

7: Pioneering Hub

The Revd Paul Whittle, Convenor of the Ministries Committee and Ms Sarah Lane Cawte, Convenor of the Mission Committee, introduced Paper B/D/M 1 regarding the use of the Newbigin Pioneering Hub to train and support lay ministers. Mr Whittle invited the Revd Ash Barker to introduce the Hub.

The Revd Camilla Veitch proposed, and several members of General Assembly indicated a willingness to second, the deletion of the word “ministers” and the pluralizing of “pioneer” and this was accepted by Mr Whittle on behalf of the Committee. Assembly accepted this amendment.

Resolution 5

General Assembly agrees to use the Newbigin Pioneering HUB to train and support its lay pioneers.

Agreed

Mr Whittle noted that the Ministries Committee had already prepared marks of ministry for lay pioneers and presented an amended Resolution 6. After discussion, the Moderator remaindered Resolutions 6 and 54.

8: Affirmative Action Towards Being an Anti-Racist Church

The Revd Anne Lewitt, Convenor of the Equalities Committee, Karen Campbell, Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries, and the Revd David Salsbury, Secretary of the Equalities Committee, introduced Resolution 7.

Resolution 7

General Assembly endorses the report of the Affirmative Action Task Group. It instructs the task group to continue consulting with other URC committees and groups, bringing firm proposals to General Assembly 2023 to ensure the URC takes positive action towards becoming an anti-racist church in terms of its recruitment and representation.

Agreed

Assembly adjourned for dinner at 6:30pm.

Session two

The Moderator reconvened Assembly at 8:00pm.

9: Ministries Paper H1

The Revd Paul Whittle, Convenor of the Ministries Committee introduced paper H1 from the Ministries Committee which led to an extended discussion about the various ministries in the URC as well as the challenges and opportunities these present.

10: UK Asylum Policy

The Revd Adam Woodhouse proposed and introduced Resolution 52 from the North Western Synod, which was seconded by Mr Aftab Mughal, regarding Her Majesty's Government's current asylum policy.

Resolution 52

General Assembly is appalled at the cruel and unjust nature of the UK's current asylum policies, including the plan to send some asylum seekers to Rwanda. It believes that those fleeing war or persecution should be treated fairly and compassionately irrespective of the situation which has brought them to our country. It directs the Mission Committee to prepare briefing materials and make representations to Government about these matters, and encourages all URCs, and their members, to write to their MPs to support this call.

Agreed

The Chaplain led Assembly in evening prayers before the Moderator adjourned Assembly for the night.

Saturday 9 July 2022

Session three

Assembly was led in worship by the Chaplain and Bible study by Dr Meg Warner from Northern College.

11: General Assembly Moderator 2023/4
The Revd Dr Elizabeth Welch took the chair and Assembly listened to a presentation from the Revd Dr Tessa Henry Robinson, candidate for Moderator for the year 2023/4. Dr Henry Robinson answered a question and, after the Assembly was led in prayer, it voted.

12: Legacies of Slavery
The Moderator, the Revd Clare Downing, took the chair and Ms Sarah Lane Cawte, Karen Campbell and Professor David Reynolds introduced Paper I6 on Legacies of Slavery and the following resolutions:

Resolution 20
General Assembly adopts the statement of 'Confession and Apology by the United Reformed Church' prepared by the Legacies of Slavery Task Group, and commits the Church to sharing the confession and apology widely, both within and beyond the URC, including with our global partners in Africa and the Caribbean.

Agreed

The Moderator remaindered Resolution 21 and Assembly broke for a coffee break.

Session four

13: Children and Youth Work Committee
The Revd Samantha Sheehan, Acting Convenor, and Ms Jo Harris, Youth Moderator, introduced Paper B1 on the work of the Children and Youth Work Committee and introduced Resolutions 3, 2, and 1.

Resolution 3
Children's and Youth Work Committee asks General Assembly to dissolve the Pilots Subcommittee as a formal structure in recognition of the changes within Pilots following General Assembly 2021. Children's and Youth Work Committee will continue to engage with and support Pilots through their network of companies and informal gathering, alongside other such networks for Children's and Youth Work.

Agreed

Resolution 1
a) General Assembly resolves that nominations for Moderator of the General Assembly may be received from Youth Assembly in addition to Synods.

b) General Assembly instructs the Business Committee to work with representatives of URC Youth to establish a proper process for these nominations.

Agreed

The Moderator remaindered Resolution 2.

14: Community Project Awards
The Moderator invited Ms Margaret Slater of Congregational Insurance to confer the awards on representatives of: Skipton Wellbeing Café held at St Andrew's Church (United Reformed and Methodist) in Skipton, the Community Uniform Swap Shop at St Columba's URC in Wolverhampton, and Roker Life at Roker URC in Sunderland. WestCan Show Choir from Westfield URC in Bridgwater and Cannington, and Dulwich Grove Community Church from Dulwich Grove Church were highly commended. Assembly congratulated the winners and highly commended projects.

15: URC Children Launch
The Revd Sam Sheehan and children at Assembly presented the following Resolution:

Resolution 4

To mark the launch of URC Children at General Assembly this year, the United Reformed Church resolves afresh to ensure that all structures and councils of the church (Church Meeting, Elders' Meeting, Synod, and General Assembly) are consistently mindful of the voice of children and of the impact of their decisions on children and future generations. To enable this, all councils of the church are encouraged to review how they are able to hear and respond to children.

Agreed

Assembly was led in intergenerational worship by the Chaplain before adjourning for lunch.

Session five

The Assembly resumed at 2:30pm.

16: Moderator 2023/4 Election Results
The Revd Camila Veitch, Convener of Tellers, announced that the Revd Dr Tessa Henry Robinson had been elected to serve as Moderator from the end of Assembly 2023.

17: Pensions
Ian Hardie, Treasurer, introduced Resolutions 11, 12 and 13 seeking Assembly's permission to move the resolutions in an amended form, as notified on the Order Paper. Assembly agreed.

Resolution 11

General Assembly endorses the work done in devising a defined contribution pension scheme to replace both the URC Final Salary Scheme and the URC Ministers' Pension Fund as the recipient of future pension contributions and authorises formal consultation with members of the existing schemes about the proposals as outlined in the paper and briefing note presented at General Assembly 2022, subject to addition of provision of ill health benefits for employees.

Agreed

Resolution 12

General Assembly approves signing of the contract with Aon referred to in that paper.

Agreed

Resolution 13

General Assembly authorises Assembly officers to consider the outcome of the consultation with members and:

- **if the officers are satisfied that no (or only minor) changes to the proposals as outlined are required, General Assembly also authorises Assembly officers to finalise the new scheme and make arrangements for the closure of the existing schemes to future accrual and for the beginning of the new scheme with effect from 1 January 2023 or as soon as practicable thereafter**
- **if not satisfied that only minor changes to the proposals are required, the Assembly officers should ensure that revised proposals are brought back for reconsideration by General Assembly or Assembly Executive acting on behalf of General Assembly as soon as is feasible.**

Agreed

18: Ministerial Discipline Process

Curtailment of a Pastoral Tie or Appointment and Confidentiality within the Discipline Process

The Moderator invited the Revd Dr Janet Tollington to present Papers R4 and R6.

Resolution 33

General Assembly, noting that the Structure [paragraph 2 (6)] recognises that:
The General Assembly which shall embody the unity of the United Reformed Church and act as the central organ of its life and the final authority, under the Word of God and the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, in all matters of doctrine and order and in all other concerns of its common life…

And acting under function (xxix)
to do such other things as may be necessary in pursuance of its responsibility for the common life of the church,

resolves that an Assembly Commission for Discipline, acting on behalf of General Assembly, may, as part of its decision-making within the Ministerial Disciplinary Process, and with the minister's name remaining on the Roll of ministers of the United Reformed Church, curtail their pastoral tie or appointment.

Agreed

After discussion, the representatives of the MIND Advisory group accepted amendments to resolution 34, and the Assembly agreed. The amended resolution was then put.

Resolution 34

Where the decision to curtail a pastoral tie or appointment is made, the General Assembly, through its Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee shall grant a period of,

normally, between three and six months, from the conclusion of the disciplinary case, for a new Call to be sought by the minister.

Agreed

Assembly broke for coffee.

Session six

The Assembly reconvened at 11:20am.

Dr Tollington moved the following resolution:

Resolution 35

General Assembly notes that an Assembly Commission for Discipline may further direct that the minister whose pastoral tie or appointment has been curtailed shall not engage with the pastorate/project, save for the purposes of handover and farewell, despite any suspension being lifted at the conclusion of the case.

Agreed

The MIND Advisory Group asked Assembly's permission to delete the crossed out words below. Assembly agreed and the resolution was put.

Resolution 36

General Assembly amends the Ministerial Disciplinary process (Section O) as follows: (changes in red)

a: Change section 6:5 to read

At the conclusion of the hearing the Assembly Commission for Discipline is to determine, on the balance of probabilities, whether any or all of the allegations made against the minister have been proved.

In respect of any proven allegation, it must decide either to impose no sanction, or that the accused minister should receive a written warning, or that any pastoral tie or appointment should be curtailed, or that his or her name should be deleted from the Roll of Ministers.

If the accused minister is the subject of an earlier written warning which remains current, the Assembly Commission for Discipline must take that into account.

A written warning, or curtailment of any pastoral tie or appointment, may be accompanied by directions regarding the minister's future ministry, conduct or remedial steps to be taken.

The Assembly Commission for Discipline may direct that, in the event it curtails a pastoral tie or appointment, the minister does not return to their existing post save for the purposes of farewell and handover.

[Note for Margin: Any extension of housing and stipend, normally for a period of between 3 and 6 months, is the concern of the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee.]

b: Change Appendix Q:7 to read

If the Commission does not accede to the minister's desire expressed in the admission notification, the Investigation Stage is to continue to the conclusion of the Hearing. If the Commission accedes to the minister's desire, it may attach Directions to a written warning, curtail any pastoral tie or appointment, or make recommendations in the event of deletion, and the same consequences are to follow as if those sanctions were imposed at the close of a Hearing.

C: add to Appendix S after Part I:

A finding of Curtailment has the effect of concluding any office or appointment which a minister may hold in a local church or any Council of the Church.

Any extension of housing and stipend, normally for a period of between 3 and 6 months from the date when curtailment takes effect, shall be a question for decision by the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee.

Directions may be given by the Assembly Commission for Discipline to accompany curtailment in the same way as provided by Part I of this Appendix in respect of written warnings. But the minister remains on the Roll and eligible to be called or appointed to a new sphere of ministry. Pending such call or appointment, the minister will be an associate member of the Synod of the province or nation of residence on the same basis as a retired minister.

c: Change Appendix T:1 to read

An Assembly Commission for Discipline, whether it directs the deletion of a minister's name from the Roll, gives a written warning, curtails a pastoral tie or appointment, imposes no sanction or declares that none of the allegations against the minister have been proved, must give a written statement of reasons for reaching its decision.

d: Change Appendix T:7 to read

It will be the responsibility of the Moderator of Synod, or the Assembly Representative for Discipline as the case may be, to ensure that the fact of any deletion from the Roll, the Directions if any accompanying a written warning, the curtailment of any pastoral tie or appointment, and any lifting of a suspension or any recommendations made under Paragraphs 2(g) or 2(h) above, are sufficiently communicated to those within the Church who need to be aware of them. The Secretary of the Assembly Commission for Discipline is to give notice directly to any outside organisation with or for whom a former minister is known to work of any recommendations under Paragraph 2(g) relevant to that organisation. The Secretary of the Assembly Commission for Discipline is to remind all recipients of the sensitive nature of the distributed information and the need for care and discretion in how it is used.

Agreed

Dr Tollington introduced Resolution 42. In the light of discussion, the representative of the MIND Advisory Group agreed to revise Appendix Y in the light of comments made and to widen the field of people who contribute to the lessons learned review after each case. Specific revisions will be bought to Assembly Executive.

In response to a comment from the Revd John Marsh the MIND Advisory Group undertook to correct a typing mistake in paragraph 7 on page 245.

Resolution 42

Assembly resolves to delete the current Appendix Y, substituting with the text in Paper R6.

Agreed

19: Mental Health First Aid Training

Assembly returned to discussion of Resolution 2.

The Revd Helen Mee proposed the following words are added to the resolution “and such training is regularly refreshed and renewed.” The Youth Assembly officers accepted the amendment, and Assembly agreed.

The Revd Mark Woodhouse moved that the matter be now put. Many members of Assembly indicated they would be willing to second the resolution. Assembly agreed and moved to a vote.

Resolution 2

General Assembly shares the concern of URC Youth Assembly to tackle the stigma surrounding mental ill health. General Assembly strongly encourages individuals to take part in Mental Health First Aid training, and encourages all local churches, Synods, and General Assembly staff and committees to help individuals access this training. General Assembly joins Youth Assembly in recommending that local churches strive to ensure that at least one person in leadership has undertaken this training and such training is regularly refreshed and renewed.

Agreed

20: Minutes of Sessions 1 and 2

The Clerk noted some typing mistakes that needed to be corrected and moved they be accepted.

Agreed

21: Parallel sessions

The Clerk noted that the Rules of Procedure make clear that the General Assembly is chaired by a current or former Moderator of the General Assembly. Because some former Moderators are unable to attend in person there are not enough Moderators to chair. Accordingly, the Business Committee invited two Synod Moderators to chair two of the parallel sessions.
The Clerk noted that Synod Moderators have been called and inducted to their ministry by the General Assembly, and have practical experience of chairing such meetings, including hybrid meetings. The Clerk moved:

Resolution 53

General Assembly agrees to suspend Rule 3.17 of the Rules of Procedure for parallel sessions at General Assembly 2022, and asks the Revd Geoffrey Clarke and the Revd Steve Faber to chair parallel sessions at General Assembly 2022.

Agreed

22: Ecumenical Greetings

Assembly was greeted by Ms Yvonne Campbell, General Secretary, Congregational Federation, and Pfarrer Martin Henninger representing the Pfalz churches. Recorded greetings were received from the Revd Ramthanga General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar.

23: The Revd Elizabeth Clark

The Revd Philip Brooks led Assembly in commemorating the sad death of the Revd Elizabeth Clark, former Rural officer.

24: Reinvigorating the URC's Ecumenical Vision

The Revd Philip Brooks introduced Paper I1 and moved the following resolution. The Revd Paul Whittle proposed amendments to section d. Mr Brooks indicated the Mission Committee had accepted them. Assembly agreed to amend the resolution.

d) General Assembly instructs the Mission Committee and the Synods to consult with the Ministries Committee, to consider whether there are ways in which resource and scoping for LEPs and Ecumenical Areas can be targeted, to address the areas of under-resourcing of our ecumenical commitments at a local level and to report back with recommendations to the 2023 General Assembly.

Due to time constraints, however, the Moderator adjourned for dinner after the Revd Steve Faber indicated that after dinner Assembly would meet in small groups / break out rooms to discuss the work of the Church Life Review Group.

After prayer, the Moderator adjourned Assembly.

Sunday 10 July 2022

Session seven

The Chaplain led worship and Dr Meg Warner led a Bible study.

The Revd John Marsh took the chair and called Assembly to order.

25: URC Environmental Policy

Ms Sarah Lane Cawte, the Revd Robert Weston, and Mr Simeon Mitchell presented Paper I2 and introduced the following resolution. During discussion Ms Judy Harris proposed an amendment to add "a representative of URC Children" to section d, and the Revd Samantha Sheehan seconded. The Convener agreed to accept the amendment, and the Assembly agreed to the amendment.

Resolution 17

General Assembly:

a) Resolves that urgent action should be taken to reduce carbon emissions across the whole of church life, with the aim of reaching net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by 2030.

b) Adopts the Environmental Policy in Part 2 of paper I2 of General Assembly 2022 with effect from January 2023, and instructs the committees and bodies under its control, and encourages associated bodies (including Trusts, the Retired Ministers Housing Society, and Resource Centres for Learning), Synods and local churches to adopt as a minimum the practices it sets out.

c) Instructs each Assembly committee to develop a Net Zero Action Plan for its area of responsibility, and set and monitor targets for implementing this policy, reporting by March 2023, and annually thereafter.

d) Establishes a Net Zero Task Group with membership of one Synod Moderator, one member of the Finance Committee, one representative of the URC Trust, the Secretary for Church and Society, the Deputy General Secretary (Admin and Resources), a representative of URC Youth, a representative of URC Children, a Synod Property Officer, and a Synod Green Apostle.

The group's remit shall be to:

1. **oversee progress in implementing this policy and report regularly to the Assembly Executive and General Assembly;**
2. **identify, advocate for, and where possible put in place any additional resources, support and expertise that are needed to implement this policy across the Church;**
3. **engage with Assembly committees around their Net Zero Action Plans and support them to develop them further;**
4. **and, encourage and facilitate the sharing of experiences across the Church, including celebrating achievements.**

Agreed

26: Ministerial Incapacity and Disciplinary Process Report
The Revd Adrian Bulley, Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship), reported that since General Assembly last met in July 2021, two Section O cases have been concluded. The first incurred costs of £18,592. The second, of £18,014. Neither case resulted in the removal of a minister's name from the Roll of Ministers.

The Moderator adjourned Assembly for coffee.

27: Worship
The chaplain led Assembly in worship, during which the Moderator preached.

The Moderator adjourned Assembly for lunch

Session eight

The Assembly resumed at 2:00pm.

28: Church Life Review Group
The Revd Steve Faber presented the reports N1 and N2 on the work of the Church Life Review Group and moved the following resolutions.

In response to a question from the Revd Dr Michael Hopkins, who noted that the paragraph about the future of the Business Committee was inadequate to cover the work of the Business Committee and further work was needed, Mr Faber gave an assurance that the Church Life Review Group would give further consideration to this and all other matters raised.

Mr Dan Morrell proposed the amendments indicated below, and the Revd Dr Michael Hopkins seconded. Assembly agreed with the amendment.

Resolution 27

General Assembly receives the initial thinking about a General Assembly Committee structure and an associated Church House staffing structure. In the light of comments at Assembly, and the results of further consultation with Committees, Synod Moderators and Clerks, it invites the Church Life Review Group to bring a further report finalised proposals to Assembly Executive in November 2022 authorising Assembly Executive to adopt these if it sees fit so to do.

Agreed

The Revd Dr Romilly Micklem proposed, and the Revd Dr Catherine Ball seconded, an amendment to resolution 28 to change the job title to Operations Officer. Assembly did not warm to this idea so the amendment was withdrawn.

The Revd Jonnie Hill proposed the Chief Operating Officer role be a fixed term contract to be determined by the Church Life Review Group. The Revd Ruth Whitehead seconded the proposal. The Church Life Review Group wished to have more time to think and the Moderator referred the matter to a facilitation group.

29: Korea Peace Appeal
The Moderator invited the Revd David Grosch Miller to address assembly. Recorded greetings from the Revd Dr Hong Jung Lee, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in

Korea were received. Dr Lee urged Assembly to support Resolution 18. Mr Grosch Miller noted that worship material for the peace appeal is available on the URC website. Ms Lane Cawte introduced the following resolution.

Resolution 18

a) General Assembly affirms its support for a lasting peace settlement to end the Korean War and instructs the General Secretary and Moderator to sign the Korea Peace Appeal on its behalf.

b) General Assembly commends the Korea Peace Appeal and urges Synods, local churches, and individuals to sign the Korea Peace Appeal in solidarity with ecumenical partners in Korea.

Agreed

30: Minutes of Saturday's Sessions

The Clerk moved the acceptance of the minutes of Saturday's sessions subject to minor corrections.

Agreed

31: Greetings from Churches Together in England

The Revd Philip Brooks introduced Bishop Mike Royal, General Secretary of Churches Together in England who addressed Assembly. The Moderator greeted Bishop Royal as well as the Church of England's representative the Revd Canon Sarah Gower.

32: Jubilee Ministers, newly commissioned Church Related Community Workers, and newly ordained Ministers

Assembly watched a visual presentation celebrating Jubilee Ministers, newly commissioned Church Related Community Workers and newly ordained Ministers of the Word and Sacraments.

33: En Bloc Business

The Revd Fran Kissack moved that this matter be not put, in order to draw Assembly's attention to the short time period between publication and the closing date for removing matters from en bloc. The Clerk pointed out that only one person had contacted him about this, but nevertheless agreed that the time period was short, and gave an assurance that the matter would be taken to the Business Committee so that there could be both better communication of dates and a longer time period. Ms Kissack then withdrew her proposal.

Assembly resolved to accept all resolutions in En Bloc Business:

Finance – paper G3

Resolution 9

General Assembly instructs the Finance Committee to bring together a group, including representatives from the URC Trust, Ministries and Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committees and the General Secretariat, to consult with Synods and/or Synod Trusts, to consider further:

- **whether a benevolent fund might be the right way to provide support to retired ministers in particular financial difficulties; and if so**

- **in what circumstances might ministers be eligible for support from such a fund; and**
- **what should be its nature and size and how might it be resourced;**
- **with a report of the group's work and/or conclusions to be presented to the 2023 General Assembly.**

Ministries – Paper H2, Paper H4

Resolution 14

General Assembly adopts the new structure of the Maintenance of the Ministry sub-committee.

Resolution 15

General Assembly accepts the additional wording on references and use of multimedia platforms such as Zoom as requested at Assembly Executive, November 2022.

Mission – Paper I4 Vision 2020

Resolution 19

General Assembly agrees to the establishment of The Mission Enabling Fund, overseen by Mission Committee, with the permission to provide small grants to local URCs, Synods and mission organisations, with the aim of pursuing the denomination's mission priorities.

Nominations - Paper J1 and J2

Resolution 22

General Assembly extends the Revd Sarah Moore's term of service as Assistant Clerk of General Assembly from 1 January 2023 to the end of General Assembly 2023.

Resolution 23

General Assembly appoints committees and representatives of the Church as set out in paragraph 10.3 of this report, subject to the additions and corrections contained in the supplementary report to Assembly.

General Secretariat – Papers M1, M2, M3

Resolution 24

General Assembly adopts the following amendments to the Basis of Union and Structure of the URC:

Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church Schedule E, Paragraph 4 – delete the word 'ministerial' before 'rights of membership'.

The Structure of the United Reformed Church Paragraph 1(4) – Add heading 'Definitions' and reword: 1.(4) Unless otherwise expressly stated or clearly excluded by the context, a) the expressions 'minister', 'ministers', 'ministry' and 'ministerial' when used in the Structure shall refer to the ministry of Word and Sacrament; b) the expression 'the Disciplinary Process' shall refer to the Process established by the General Assembly under paragraph 2(6)(xxi), but includes any process so established for similar purposes before the adoption of that provision; c) the expression 'the Incapacity Procedure' shall

refer to the Procedure established by the General Assembly under paragraph 2(6)(xxiii), but includes any process so established for similar purposes before the adoption of that provision.

Paragraph 2(1) – in function (ix), insert '(subject to paragraph 2(7)(ii))' before 'to suspend or remove names'.

In the Functions of Synods, delete the initial 'A' and the words in brackets.

Function (xvii) – delete existing text and replace with the following: 'To discharge the functions required under the Disciplinary Process to be exercised by the synod, either directly, or indirectly through other officers or bodies, as the Process may provide'. Function (xviii) – delete existing text and replace with the following: 'To discharge the functions required under the Incapacity Procedure to be exercised by the synod, either directly, or indirectly through other officers or bodies, as the Procedure may provide'. Function (xxi) after 'Disciplinary Process' delete 'contained in Section O'. Delete section (B) of the Functions of Synods

Paragraph 2.(5) – In sub-paragraph (A), after 'the following functions', delete the words in brackets.

In the Functions of Ecumenical Area Meetings, Function (viii), delete 'contained in Section O' and the cross-reference in brackets.

Function (xviii) - delete existing text and replace with the following: 'To discharge, concurrently with the synod, such of the functions and duties conferred or imposed by the Disciplinary Process or the Incapacity Procedure upon the synod in respect of a minister or Church Related Community Worker (or former holder of either office) serving or resident within the Ecumenical Area, after proceedings involving that person are concluded, as the synod may from time to time request'.

Paragraph 2.(6) – After 'General Assembly is responsible for exercising the following Functions' delete the words in brackets.

In the Functions of the General Assembly, Function (xviii), delete the words in brackets. Functions (xxi) to (xxvii) – delete existing text and replace with the following: (xxi) to establish, and from time to time to review, amend or replace a Process for dealing with cases of Discipline involving ministers or Church Related Community Workers;. (xxii) to discharge the functions required under the Disciplinary Process to be exercised by the Assembly, either directly, or indirectly through other officers or bodies, as the Process may provide; (xxiii) to establish, and from time to time to review, amend or replace a Procedure for dealing with cases of Incapacity involving ministers or Church Related Community Workers; (xxiv) to discharge the functions required under the Incapacity Procedure to be exercised by the Assembly, either directly, or indirectly through other officers or bodies, as the Procedure may provide. Renumber the last two functions (xxv) and (xxvi).

Insert new paragraph 2(7) as follows:
'Restriction on exercise of conciliar functions 2(7)(i) As soon as any minister or Church Related Community Worker becomes the subject of a case under the Disciplinary

Process or the Incapacity Procedure, no council of the Church shall exercise any of its functions in respect of that person in such a manner as to affect, compromise or interfere with the conduct of that case, save as provided for by the Process or Procedure itself. (ii) The function of the Church Meeting to maintain standards of membership shall not be exercised in a disciplinary context in respect of any member of the local church who is at that time a minister or Church Related Community Worker; nor shall any such member be removed from the Roll of Members or the membership of that person be suspended by the Church Meeting for disciplinary reasons. (iii) The decision reached in any particular case (whether or not on appeal) under the Disciplinary Process or the Incapacity Procedure shall be made in the name of the General Assembly and shall be final and binding, and once so initiated that case shall be resolved only by the steps for which that Process or Procedure provides.'

Paragraph 5 - delete existing opening text and replace with the following: 5. The procedure for dealing with references and appeals not concerned with the Incapacity Procedure or the Disciplinary Process is as follows:

Paragraph 5.4 – delete final sentence and replace with the following: No procedure governed by this paragraph shall be used to review or appeal against decisions reached under the Disciplinary Process or the Incapacity Procedure. Delete paragraphs 6 and 7 in their entirety.

Resolution 25

General Assembly resolves to make the following additions to the Structure:
Functions of Church Meeting: [numbering to be determined]

a) To appoint a Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
b) To adopt and promote implementation of safeguarding policy in line with General Assembly recommendations.
c) To receive regular safeguarding reports from the church Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

Functions of Elders' Meeting: [numbering to be determined]

a) To satisfy themselves that all necessary procedures are in place to achieve the aims of the church's safeguarding policy.
b) To adopt best safeguarding practice for all church activities.
c) To report to Church Meeting and to Synod.
d) To report to the building trustees, charity regulators and insurers when advised to do so by the Synod Safeguarding Officer.

Functions of Synod: [numbering to be determined]

a) To appoint a Synod Safeguarding Officer or equivalent.
b) To have oversight of, and to support, monitor and report safeguarding related activities and issues within local churches, and amongst ministers, officers and staff of the Synod.
c) To take all necessary powers and actions positively to promote implementation of good practice in accordance with the safeguarding policy statement adopted by the General Assembly.
d) To adopt best safeguarding practice for all its own activities and events.

Functions of General Assembly: [numbering to be determined]

a) To appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead.
b) To have oversight of local churches and Synods, monitoring practice.
c) To adopt a safeguarding policy statement and procedures for use throughout the whole United Reformed Church.
d) To advise on all matters of safeguarding throughout the Church.
e) To adopt best safeguarding practice for all its own activities and events.

Resolution 1

General Assembly resolves to make the following additions to the Rules of Procedure:

Safeguarding Implementation: [numbering to be determined]

1. Church Meeting:
a) To appoint a Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator who is cognisant of current safeguarding policy, practice and procedure.
b) To receive regular – at least annual – safeguarding reports from the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

2. Elders' Meeting:
a) To present an annual safeguarding report to Church Meeting and an annual safeguarding return to synod.

3. Synod:
a) To appoint a Synod Safeguarding Officer with the necessary experience, qualifications and current knowledge.
b) To arrange for safeguarding training as appropriate.
c) To collate church safeguarding returns and forward them to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

4. General Assembly:
a) To appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead with the necessary experience, qualifications and current knowledge.

Resolution 26

General Assembly notes the Churches which have closed since last they were reported to General Assembly. We give thanks to God for the worship and witness offered by these fellowships across the years.

Law and Polity Advisory Group: Paper P1 – no resolution

Safeguarding Advisory Group: Paper T1 – no resolution

Ministerial Incapacity and Discipline Advisory Group: Papers R1, R2, R3, R5, R7, and R8

Resolution 29

General Assembly resolves to change 8.7 of Section O to read:
The costs incurred in the work of an Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline in respect of allegations against a minister serving under oversight of a Synod shall be charged against funds of the United Reformed Church under the control of that Synod. Any other costs incurred by an Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline, by any Commission

or Secretary of Commissions in operating the Process, the fees and expenses of any qualified person appointed under Appendix K as an additional member of an Investigation Team, and the reasonable expenses of any witness attending a Hearing shall be charged against funds of the Church under the control of the General Assembly.

Resolution 30

General Assembly resolves to insert the following to Appendix K6.
If, from the information available at this stage, the case appears to be onerous due to the likely volume of evidence or the complexity of such evidence and that professional assistance in investigation would be appropriate, the senior member shall refer the matter to the Executive Group of the Disciplinary Process who may appoint a suitably qualified person, whether or not a member of the URC, as an additional member of the Investigation Team.

Resolution 31

The General Assembly indemnifies any role-holder within the Ministerial Disciplinary and Incapacity procedures, who has been duly appointed by the General Assembly or on its behalf, trained, and has acted within the authority vested in them by those processes.

Resolution 32

General Assembly inserts a new paragraph 8:10 be inserted into the Framework
If, in the Investigation Stage, there is any need for an interpretation of the process, the procedure to be followed in a particular case, or if a complaint is raised by any party to the process, such matters shall be referred to the Executive Group of the Disciplinary Process. The Executive Group of the Disciplinary comprising the Convenor of the Ministerial Incapacity and Discipline Advisory Group, the Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel, and the Senior Member of the Disciplinary Investigation Panel or (if the Convenor or Senior Member are involved in the case concerned their Deputies) who, having taken such legal advice as considered necessary, may issue a definitive ruling on the matter. The Executive Group of the Disciplinary Process may also be a source of advice to the Assembly Commission for Discipline who assume all authority for the case in the Hearing Stage or the Disciplinary Appeal Commission during any appeal.

Resolution 40

General Assembly resolves to change Appendix K of Section O to read:

6. On receiving the material transmitted by the Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline, the Senior Member is to appoint three willing members of the Investigation Panel to form an Investigation Team for that case, and one panel member to assist the accused minister to address the issues and, if required, before the ACD or the DAppC, having regard to geographical proximity to the accused, complainant and likely witnesses as well as to appropriate skills and experience. No Panel member who is related to, belonging to the same local church as, or otherwise closely concerned with the accused minister or the complainant, has any pastoral or personal involvement with the case or is liable to be a witness, may be appointed to an Investigation Team for that case. Subject to these considerations, the Senior Member should also consider the desirability of all members of the Panel having regular involvement with disciplinary cases. The Senior Member may him or herself serve on an Investigation Team when that appears appropriate.

7. **Ministers are encouraged to use an Assisting Member of the Disciplinary Investigation Panel to help gather evidence and draw up their own statement/s, and, either to accompany the minister to the hearing before the ACD or the DAppC or to present the minister's case.**

Resolution 41

General Assembly changes Appendix L to read

5. **No interview with any person outside the Team, whether taking place in person, by electronic means or by telephone, may take place unless at least two members of the Team are present; the person being interviewed must also be offered the opportunity to have a friend (or, in the case of the accused minister, a colleague, their assisting Investigation Panel member, or Trade Union representative) present. A note of any interview is to be taken at the time or made immediately afterward, and a copy supplied to the person interviewed for comment.**

Resolution 43

General Assembly deletes section 2 of Appendix H and replaces it with:
The Assembly Representative for Discipline will normally be the General Secretary or their duly appointed deputy. Where a disciplinary case is brought against the General Secretary the line manager of the General Secretary (or if for any reason that is inappropriate, such person as the Officers of the General Assembly shall appoint without reference to the General Secretary) shall act as Assembly Representative for Discipline.

Resolution 44

General Assembly resolves to appoint the General Secretary as the Assembly Representative for Discipline – or the Line Manager of the General Secretary if the case in question concerns the General Secretary.

Resolution 45

General Assembly resolves the transitional arrangements set out in Paper R8 of General Assembly 2022 from the 'old' to the 'new' Ministerial Disciplinary Process.

34: Matters Removed from En Bloc

The Revd Paul Whittle presented H3 noting the Ministries Committee had made a change to the policy set out in the paper:

At 3.2.5 it stated –
"it is expected that ministers and lay folk will not charge for pastoral supervision of URC ministers, and will pastorally supervise no less than six ministers per month when fully qualified."

The change made to the policy by the committee was the expectation that three sessions, not six, a month will be offered.

35: Private Members' Resolution on Travel Expenses

The supporting text had been printed on the Order Paper:
The rationale for the request is that the lower HMRC rate of 25 pence per mile (set by HMRC for when a worker has done over 10,000 business miles) no longer reasonably covers the costs of travel. Based upon conversations that the proposers have had in recent weeks, the lower HMRC rate of only 25 pence/mile is at best discouraging and at worst preventing attendance

and participation, and is becoming an issue of exclusion as some are less able to afford to participate.

The Revd Anne Sardeson proposed, and the Revd Alex Clare-Young seconded, the following resolution:

Resolution 53

In the light of increasing fuel costs, General Assembly requests the Finance Committee to reconsider the current policy of paying only the lower HMRC rate for travel expenses at General Assembly level, and encourages Synods and other bodies also to reconsider this.

Agreed

36: Possible One Off Payments to Ministers and Lay Staff

The treasurer, Mr Ian Hardie, introduced Paper G2 and moved the following resolution.

Ms Jo Harris moved an amendment asking Synods also to consider the matter, and Heather Moore seconded. Assembly agreed.

Mr Dan Morell proposed a further amendment adding local churches. A number of members of Assembly indicated their willingness to second the amendment. Assembly agreed.

The Clerk then noted that the Legal Advisor had drawn attention to the unintentional use of the word “work” which might have misinterpreted concerning the employment status of ministers, and proposed that this be changed to “serving”. Many members of Assembly indicated they would second this. Assembly agreed.

The Revd Steve Faber moved that the issue be now put. Many members of Assembly indicated they would second this. Assembly agreed that the amended resolution be now put and the matter moved to a vote.

Resolution 8

General Assembly resolves that, as a gesture of good will towards those who serve the Church centrally and bearing in mind the recent energy cost increases for many, with the likelihood of further energy price rises to come later in the year, a gross payment should be made together with October 2022 stipend and salary payments amounting to:

- **£800 in the case of each office holder in receipt of a stipend under the URC Plan for Partnership; and**
- **£500 in the case of each ‘Church House’ employee. General Assembly urges Synods and local churches to consider these issues for their staff.**

Agreed

The following members of Assembly formally recorded their dissent:
Mr Tony Corfe
Ms Hilda Darkwah
Mrs Bridget Micklem
The Revd Dr Romilly Micklem
The Revd Dr Hazel Staritt

37: Reinvigorating the Ecumenical Vision of the United Reformed Church
Assembly returned to considering Paper I1.

The Revd Philip Brooks moved the resolution below.

Resolution 16

a) General Assembly affirms that Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) continue to be central to the ecumenical mission and vision of the United Reformed Church.

b) General Assembly reminds Synods and local churches that joint or ecumenical members of LEPs have always been and remain members of the United Reformed Church, not just those who were members of the URC at the formation of the LEP.

c) Recognising that the approaches to ecumenism are different in England, Scotland, Wales, the Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands, General Assembly affirms the new lighter touch forms of ecumenical co-operation contained in the Churches Together in England documents, A Flexible Framework for Local Unity in Mission and the accompanying Toolkit and encourages the creative use of these resources.

d) General Assembly instructs the Mission Committee and the Synods to consult with the Ministries Committee, to consider whether there are ways in which resource and scoping for LEPs and Ecumenical Areas can be targeted, to address the areas of under-resourcing of our ecumenical commitments at a local level and to report back with recommendations to the 2023 General Assembly.

Agreed

The Moderator adjourned Assembly for dinner.

Session ten

38: Parallel sessions
Assembly met in parallel sessions to consider reports from Committees.

39: Evening prayer
Assembly concluded its work for the day with evening prayer led by the Chaplain.

Monday 11 July 2022

Session eleven

After prayers the Assembly turned to business.

40: Minutes
The Clerk moved the acceptance of Sunday's minutes, subject to minor typographical corrections, and that after checking the minutes of Monday's sessions be agreed by the Officers of Assembly.

Agreed

41: Remaindered business

a: Resolution 6
The Revd Paul Whittle sought Assembly's permission to withdraw Resolution 6.
This was granted.

Mr Whittle indicated he would retain the request relayed in Friday's second order paper to remove the word 'just' from the middle of paragraph 3.5. Additionally, the Ministries Committee requested permission to amend the examples cited in paragraph 1 by deleting the two given examples, and replacing them with 'Lay Preachers and local leaders' as these better model the intention. Assembly agreed.

Mr Whittle proposed the following resolution:

Resolution 55

General Assembly adopts the marks of ministry of a Lay Pioneer and requests the Fresh Expressions and Pioneering Enabling Group to consult with the relevant committees and the Synods in the development of guidelines for the recognition and exercise of this ministry.

Agreed

b: Resolution 21
Ms Sarah Lane Cawte, and Ms Karen Campbell introduced Resolution 21.

Resolution 21

General Assembly affirms its commitment to practical actions to address the continuing negative impacts of the legacies of transatlantic slavery on black communities in the UK, the Caribbean and Africa, and instructs the Legacies of Slavery Task Group to bring concrete and costed proposals to General Assembly 2023 for a considered programme of repairing justice.

Agreed

c: Resolution 28
The Facilitation Group reported that they felt that Assembly had not understood what was being proposed, and invited the Church Life Review to explain their proposals further.

The Revd Steve Faber sought Assembly's permission to amend Resolution 28. During discussion it was agreed that the Assembly Officers would take further legal advice on the nature of any potential Genuine Occupational Requirement. The Revd Ruth Whitehead requested that, regardless of Genuine Occupational Requirement, the job description and person specification be very clear on the nature of Christian mission and the work of the church, with which Mr Faber agreed.

Resolution 28

Assembly resolves to create a "Chief Operating Officer" post to replace the current Deputy General Secretary Administration and Resources role upon the retirement of the current post-holder. It authorises the Officers of the General Assembly to agree job title, a finalised Job Description and Person Specification, having taken advice from the Human Resources Advisory Group.

Agreed

Moderator Elect Acceptance Speech
The Moderator Elect, the Revd Dr Tessa Henry Robinson addressed the Assembly.

42: Address to the Throne
Mr Derek Estill read the Address to the Throne:

Address to the Throne
From the United Reformed Church General Assembly, July 2022

To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty:

The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church, meeting in hybrid form in Derbyshire and online, sends loyal greetings to Your Majesty. Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

It is a particular delight to be sending our greetings in this special year in which we share a jubilee.

We send our warmest wishes and congratulations to Your Majesty as you mark seventy years on the throne. We are thankful for your steadfast and faithful service to the people of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth over the seven decades of your reign. You set an inspiring example of duty, integrity and public service; values which, as recent events have made so clear, are so vital to uphold in public life.

The many Platinum Jubilee celebrations held around the world and in local communities this year are a clear expression of the gratitude and high esteem in which Your Majesty is held.

We wish to place on record our appreciation of Your Majesty's public witness to your Christian faith and the way in which you have sought to live your life as a servant of Christ. This serves as a great encouragement to all of us called to walk the way of Jesus.

The United Reformed Church is currently celebrating the 50th anniversary of our inauguration as a denomination. The coming together of the Presbyterian Church of England with the Congregational Church in England and Wales in 1972 marked the beginning of a pioneering ecumenical experiment that it was hoped would further the unity of God's people.

As well as giving thanks for five decades of worship, witness, service and ecumenical endeavour, in our jubilee year we have been reflecting on the challenges we face and how our church life might be renewed in faithful response to them. At General Assembly, a new way of supporting ministry for and with children has been launched, we have agreed plans to support lay pioneers and reinvigorate the ecumenical vision of the Church, and we have deepened our environmental commitments in response to the climate emergency, and made a commitment to taking positive action against racism in all its forms.

Given the Biblical understanding of jubilee as a moment to set right past wrongs, it is fitting that the General Assembly has also agreed a confession and apology for the role that we and our antecedent bodies played in the transatlantic slave trade, and its legacies in the scars which continue to blight our society, our Church, and the lives of black people in our midst and around the globe today. We have supported too an impassioned plea for those fleeing war or persecution to be treated fairly and compassionately by Your Government.
At a time of anxiety and turmoil for many communities, our country and our world, we pray that God will strengthen us to live out the jubilee calling to work and witness for forgiveness and freedom, justice and renewal.

We pray too that God will sustain and guide Your Majesty in all the days to come.

The Assembly agreed that this be sent.

44: Moderator's reflection
The Moderator shared her reflections from her term of office.

The Revd Adrian Bulley, Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) thanked the Moderator, noting that the Revd Downing had been inducted online at a rather hastily convened Assembly for that purpose in July 2020 in the midst of the pandemic. As Moderator Ms Downing had served the Church through numerous lockdowns, for two years, the first of which was alongside her co-Moderator Peter Pay. Mr Bulley noted she had led the church with her characteristic humour, great competence and clarity, as well as with firmness where that was necessary. Mr Bulley observed the church had felt safe in her hands. Mr Bulley thanked Ms Downing for carrying an additional load on our behalf alongside her busy ministry as Moderator of the Wessex Synod. Assembly thanked Ms Downing.

The Assembly adjourned for a coffee break.

Session twelve

The Assembly reconvened and the Chaplain led Assembly in worship during which the Revd Fiona Bennett was inducted as Moderator of Assembly, and the Moderator and the Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) led a confession and apology from the United Reformed Church for the role of its antecedents in transatlantic slavery and its continuing complicity in the legacies of the trade today.

The Revd Adrian Bulley, Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) announced that the Assembly having completed its business, now stood adjourned to meet, as agreed, at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, from 30 June to 3 July 2023, or at such other place or on such other date as shall be determined.

Church closures

Northern Synod

Bolden United Reformed Church

Apart from St Nicholas Parish Church (14th century) in West Boldon, the United Reformed Church building is the oldest church in the Boldons.

From 1817, the Ministers of Congregational Church in Sunderland called Independents (old dissenters), attempted to establish a cause in East Boldon.

From 1823 to 1830, meetings were held in a cottage in East Boldon.

In 1830, a chapel began to be built. However, the owner's business failed four and a half years later and, as the building had not been put in a trust, it was seized by the creditors and sold to the Episcopalians (quotation from Anglican records "a former nonconformist chapel was being used as a Chapel of Ease for the people of East Boldon."). Two rooms in the village were then secured. At first the cause was going well, but afterwards declined.

In 1847, a cottage was made into a meeting place accommodating 100 individuals.

In 1859, the Revd G C Maitland laid the question of Boldon before his church in Fawcett Street, Sunderland, when assistance was given.

In 1862, the foundation for a chapel was laid and in 1863 a red brick chapel was opened.

In 1864, a church was formed and the first church meeting held. The building housed the school for the community, until a local authority school was built. The building was registered for public worship and solemnisation of marriage and, in September 1872, the first marriage took place.

A new stone church building was opened in 1876. There were accounts in the local newspapers of the foundation stone laying and of the opening service of the church building with a tea held in a marquee erected in a field behind the church with up to 500 people attending.

East Boldon grew quickly with the development of the railways and the congregation appeared to have thrived. There is evidence that the members came from both East and West Boldon.

There are tinted windows in the roundel and lancets in the north end of the church, which may be original. After 1880, stained glass windows became generally acceptable and the windows in the bow section of the church are dated 1924. The two Great War memorial windows on the west side of the church are likely to date from the same time. They are all signed and from a Newcastle firm: Atkinson Bros. There are two plaques dedicated to those who died in service in the Great War, and a third plaque to those who died in service in the Second World War.

Many of the early records and minutes are held in the Durham County Record office and the Discovery museum archives in Newcastle.

The church (alongside the pubs) was, for many years, the hub of social life in the village; there was an active drama group putting on plays and functions in the hall, the W.I. used the premises for their activities, and there were at times groups like Pilots and Guides associated with the church. There were separate women's meetings and men's meetings held midweek and a choir leading worship and putting on concerts (there were still more than two members of the choir in the early 1970s who sat at the front of the church around the communion table).

Regular fund-raising activities were the norm; coffee mornings, spring fayres, speaker evenings, Burns Night, ceilidhs, etc. The congregation have always been open and welcoming, having accepted refugees and asylum seekers in the past, though none stayed long in Boldon. It was the first church in South Tyneside and Sunderland to register for same sex marriages, though none have actually taken place yet.

The congregation embraced the formation of the URC and, when the congregation membership fell so could not support a minister on their own, joined with first Roker, and later the other Sunderland URC churches, to form the Sunderland and Boldon partnership. The church is in a different local authority area to the others in the partnership and has been active in the Boldon Churches Together group and South Tyneside Churches Together.

In the recent past, (in keeping with the original thoughts and aims of the URC) there was consideration to forming a Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) with the Methodist church, but there was not enough support within the two churches for this to happen.

The church has struggled in the past few years, mainly in terms of numbers of membership, and the pandemic has placed a heavy burden on the dwindling congregation, which has led to the decision to close.

Christ Church United Reformed Church, North Broomhill

The Church of Christ Chapel, North Broomhill began at the end of a terrace called Chapel Row. One of the founder members was Mr Edward Henderson. They then bought the Primitive Methodist Church on the corner of the village in 1932. One of the church Elders then was Mr William Rutherford. The Church of Christ Chapel then sold their building in Chapel Row to Mr J Wood to convert into a house.

On 21 December 1939, a bomber crashed into Church of Christ Chapel and both caught fire. The pilot, Sargent H Marshall, was thrown from his machine and sustained a fractured leg and other minor injuries. Sargent Samuel Hainey Potts (aged 24 years) and ACI Edward Harry Humprey (aged 20 years) – the only other occupants, died. Both the chapel and the plane were completely destroyed.

The Coal Company Institute allowed the chapel the use of their upstairs room situated at the end of the terrace in School Row, until the new church has been re-built.

The foundation stone for the new church building was laid in 1951. The Church of Christ, North East District, employed a full-time minister based at Newcastle. The services were led by many different lay ministers from the district.

The church hall was built in 1963 adjoining the church, with a kitchen, cloakroom and toilet facilities. The hall was to benefit the Fellowship of Youth (FOY) and it was very popular with the young people of the village and surrounding area. The hall was also used for social events for people of all ages, thus making it a great asset.

Four of the later ministers employed by the Church of Christ District were: the Revd Harry Bell, the Revd David Arthur, the Revd Ken Forrest and the Revd Danny Wall.

The Church of Christ became a United Reformed Church in 1981.

The church hall, which had become derelict, was refurbished in 1988 and brought into regular use to serve both the church and the local community again (with the help of church members – Alan Purvis, George Strong and Eric Fulton).

The inauguration service and the formation of the LEP took place on Saturday 3 June 1989, where the Revd A E Buglass MA (Northern Section, Morpeth Methodist Circuit) and the Revd E Walton (Auxiliary Minister, URC Northumberland District) were comissioned.

Members of North Broomhill URC and Hadston Methodist Church agreed to work and worship together as one congregation under the name of Christ Church (United Reformed/Methodist), North Broomhill, believing on one holy catholic and apostolic Church seeking the visible unity of the Church in worship and mission, to be a Local Ecumenical partnership and to continue to witness to the values of the Kingdom of God in North Broomhill, Hadston and the surrounding area.

The Partnership accepted both the faith and the membership of both the United Reformed and Methodist churches regarding baptism and confirmation. There was to be a common roll of all members – and the roll was to indicate whether that person was Methodist, United Reformed or a joint member. Membership issues continued to be a matter for each denomination, following its own procedures and provisions.

The church was refurbished in 1991 on the initiative of the Revd E Walton.

On Saturday 1 June 1991, a service of thanksgiving and rededication took place, conducted by the Revd David Jenkins BA, Bd, STM, Moderator of the Northern Province of the United Reformed Church.

The church closed on 25 July 2021.

St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Hebburn

The congregation originally met in an upstairs room of a house on Ellison Street. At the time when the foundation stone was laid in 1870, the congregation of 116 had moved into the newly built school house.

The original St Andrew's church in Hebburn was built in 1873 by Andrew Leslie for his workforce who came from Aberdeen to work in his shipyard. The funds were raised by subscription and from Andrew Leslie and Co. Initially, the total building cost was estimated at £4,500, but the actual cost was £9,000.

The church was opened on 25 April 1873. It is still a landmark in Hebburn, easily recognised by its tall steeple and was aptly named the 'cathedral church of the North'.

The congregation continued to worship in the church until December 1982, when it was no longer feasible due to diminished numbers and lack of finances for the upkeep of the building.

Although members were very sad to leave the building, they were welcomed into a sharing agreement with St John's Church of England. This continued until 10 November 2001, until it became evident that the arrangement was no longer practical, resulting in the termination of the sharing agreement.

Members were then welcomed to the Independent Methodist church and another Sharing Agreement was formed.

In 2007, a joint pastorate was created with their sister churches, St Margaret's, St Paul's and St John's in South Shields.

Although St Andrew's URC was small in number, the congregation always accepted the challenges before them and remained faithful. The congregation reduced to eleven members and,

due to the events of Covid-19, plus deteriorating health issues of some of the members, it was decided to close the church with effect from 30 September, to coincide with the retirement of their minister, the Revd Helen Drummond.

Currently, the church is a Buddhist temple and the building has been beautifully and tastefully transformed. It still has some original features and is a tranquil place to visit.

Some of the congregation have enjoyed attending services at St Margaret's URC in South Shields since they reopened. There is a possibility some of the congregation may attend churches of other denominations in Hebburn.

St Paul and St John's United Reformed Church

The church has a history on two sites: the first is a traditional church on Beach Road, built in 1876, and the second was the Church centre on Broughton Road, built in the 1900 hundreds. The building on Beach Road was formally known as St Johns Presbyterian Church and was renamed in 1968 when St Paul's Presbyterian Church closed and the congregations combined. It became a United Reformed Church in 1972.

The church was well attended by all ages and was associated with Sea Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, Girl Guides, Brownies and Rainbows. There was a Sunday school and children's worship was encouraged. The pastoral work was supported by deaconesses, Elders and the minister.

The church supported many local and overseas charities, the building was used for concerts and social events. The churches had links with local schools, who used the building for education and carol services.

As time progressed, and members became fewer, to close the Beach Road church, with a final service on 28 September 2019.The building was sold to Shield Church and members were pleased it was still going to be used as a church.

The church on Broughton Road had previously been used by the church members for sports and social events. It was used as a military hospital during the First World War.

In 2006, the building was renovated to provide disabled access with a lift, ramps and disabled toilets. The update provided renting space for local community groups. Therefore, the mission statement became 'building faith in people'.

The centre continued to thrive, hosting a mother and toddler group in a refurbished scout den, Age UK and Street Angels.

Broughton Road became a joint pastorate with St Margaret's URC and St Andrew's URC, often holding joint pastorate services. They welcomed lay preachers and ministers of other denominations to lead worship and maintained links with Churches Together. Easter sunrise services were held and other churches came to eat breakfast.

In 2019, Broughton Road was registered as a place of worship. Membership and attendance became smaller, and maintaining the building was also becoming a challenge.

In 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the church held services by phone and a weekly service sheet was distributed by the minister.

The decision was made to close the church in September 2021.

St Andrew's also made the decision to close and members were encouraged to worship at St Margaret's URC, which some are.

North Western Synod

Accrington United Reformed Church, Blackburn

The church was established in 1876 as Whalley Road Congregational Church Accrington, by a group of worshippers who broke away from the former Oak St Congregational Church Accrington. The breakaway was the result of a dispute, but precise details of the cause of the fracture are not known.

The church subsequently joined the United Reformed Church at its creation and continued to operate for many years as both a place of worship and a centre for a variety of community activities.

In recent years, the church has experienced a gradual decline in the numbers attending services, to such an extent that between 2015 and 2020 it lost approximately one third of its membership. As the remaining congregation was predominantly at the upper range of the age scale, it became increasingly difficult to appoint suitably qualified members to undertake the duties essential to the effective operation of the church.

In addition, because of its age and size, the church premises came to require increasing levels of maintenance and repair.

After extensive consultation and detailed consideration, the church met and reluctantly resolved on 2 May 2021 to close.

Burnley and Nelson United Reformed Church, Burnley

Congregationalism made a tentative appearance in Burnley in 1807, when a small group of people hired a room over a shoemakers shop on what is now St James Street. This group grew until, in 1813, the building of the first Bethesda Chapel was started. The church opened in September 1814, with the generous help of benefactors.

In 1835, the church was extended and registered for the solemnisation of marriages.
In 1848, a breakaway group of 43 members formed Salem Church, which opened on Manchester Road in 1850.

A second breakaway group began in 1859, which led to the opening of Westgate Church in 1861. By 1864, all the differences between the three churches had been settled and all congregations were co-operating in united services and lectures.

In 1866, a resolution was made to build a new church. It was closed in 1877 for re-building and was re-opened again as a new church in 1879.

In 1869, a decision was made to open a mission school for less privileged children. Salford Street (the Ragged School) was opened near the church and ran until 1880.

A two-storey school was erected by the [name] church in 1892. A small graveyard was situated in front of the school.

In 1895, a new chapel was built at Hollingreave, in an area known as Burnley Wood.
The early years of the 20th century witnessed countless changes in the work of the church, ie the basic principles of church life. An Education Act, compulsory education for all children, the opening of cinemas and a roller skating rink all brought challenges to the ethos of the church.
In early 1914, the church was temporarily closed to enable the installation of electric lights, a new organ and re-decoration.

During the Second World War, the metal railings and iron gates surrounding the graveyard were requisitioned for the war effort.

The end of this war signalled the decline of family worship and the number of people attending church.

In 1960, the school buildings were sold. The graveyard was decommissioned and those laid to rest were relocated to the crematorium.

In 1961, overtures were made to Hollingreave church for a joint pastorate.

By the end of 1965, a suggestion was made to combine the four local churches: Hollingreave, Salem, Bethesda and Westgate to become The Burnley Congregational Church.

Salem joined Bethesda church in 1969. Westgate church merged in 1970. Hollingreave joined them in 1979.

There were structural alterations done to the church, to the building seen today.
In 2016, Nelson URC closed and joined the Burnley congregation to form Burnley and Nelson URC.

Over 200 years, Burnley and Nelson URC have had many ministers and church members support its development. The Bethesday Story, by Leslie Chapples contains more details regarding the church's history.

Christ Church LEP (Methodist church remaining), South Reddish, Stockport,

Christ Church, Reddish in Stockport was a fruit of the flowering of local ecumenism in the 1970s. With much older roots on its Wesleyan Methodist and United Reformed/Congregational sides, the two strands joined in one building and congregation in 1978.

As often happens, building issues got two churches talking to each other seriously, in this case the former Reddish Congregational Church (by then URC) on Lilian Grove and Reddish Green Methodist Church. The two congregations had co-existed and moved around the area from building to building since the 1850s.

By the early 1970s, both churches had buildings in need of refurbishment and the national mood was for denominations to come together. Such talks took time, and these were no exception. Hopes of selling both sites and rebuilding somewhere new fell through, so the Lilian Grove building (a Congregational Church which had been opened in 1914) was refurbished.
Unity comes in all different sorts of ways, not just sharing buildings. The moment when Reddish URC dramatic society invited the Reddish Green Group to put on a play was a particular highlight that led to the first of several marriages between members of the two churches. A flourishing drama group continued to be a significant part of the new church's mission, drawing in wide community support; working with a Youth Green Group for a time as well. Several careers in drama and entertainment were launched from this work with children and young people. Sadly, the onset of the pandemic brought things to a halt. The spotlight then fell on how few were now able to attend Sunday worship, the need to spend much more on the buildings again, and the church's poor financial position.

The church made the decision to close in June and the closing service was conducted by the Revd Lindsay Kemp (the Methodist minister who had served the church as part of the United Stockport Circuit) on Sunday 19 September.

Conversations between URC, Methodist and Church of England people on the ground have begun to discover what the Holy Spirit may want the churches to do next to serve the people of Reddish. Work with Re-Dish, a local charity, which combats food poverty, alleviates youth crime and supports the community allotment, may well be part of this.

Cleveleys United Reformed Church, Thornton Cleveleys

No report given.

Chapel Street and Hope United Reformed Church, Salford

On Friday 30 January 1818, members of Grosvenor St Chapel, Manchester separated to form the Congregational church in Salford. They became part of the Church of Christ.

That new church first met in a tin-shack they rented on Greengate in Salford with the intent to build their own property, which they opened on 28 July 1819.

The church prospered and there are reports of carriages queueing all along Chapel Street waiting to drop off people to attend Sunday morning worship.

In 1822, several members started a Sunday school and mission for the poor people of Salford. This was in a room, located at the entry by the Oldfield Road end of Hope Street.

This became Hope Chapel, which opened in 1838 by 40 members from Chapel St Chapel. Aproximately 80 gentlemen sat down to lunch in the new building after the first morning worship, and between them raised £95 to pay toward the cost of the building.

The mission of both Chapel St Chapel and Hope Chapel ran in parallel, each serving the people in their surrounding communities: providing food, clothing and Christian teaching, especially to children.

In 1938, it was decided to close the Chapel St Chapel building due to structural problems in the roof, but worship continued in the schoolroom. The Second World War resulted in further damage to the building. The church membership made the decision to rebuild. They raised the money and were able to reopen the church in 1964.

Following the formation of the United Reformed Church in 1972, Hope Chapel took the decision to close and the membership joined with Chapel St Chapel. The church was renamed Chapel St and Hope URC. At this time, the adjacent school building was sold.

Over the years since then, membership has gradually declined through age and changes in the areas around the church.

Six years ago, following a time of prayer and bible study, the church decided to seek a possible partner to develop the site by building new apartments with a new church on the Ground Floor.

Sadly, legal problems with neighbours delayed this, then Covid-19 delayed it further.

In re-opening the church, members realised that if they continued with the project, it would take another three years to complete. They felt that they would be too old to make the best use of what would be a new building and new church.

And so, the decision was made to close. This they did with a final family service on 10 October 2021, after a very emotional celebration service on 9 October 2021 attended by over 100 friends and supporters from past years.

Church of the Epiphany, Droylsden

It was in the 1990s that the idea first surfaced of St Matthew's URC joining with their Anglican and Methodist neighbours, Saint Andrews Church of England parish and Edge Lane Methodist Church. None of these congregations had a suitable set of premises so the solution gradually emerged of selling two church sites, pooling resources and raising funds to build one, modern, flexible church serving the surrounding community in east Manchester.

The Revd Dr Jack McKelvey, former principal of Northern College, was a keen advocate of the proposal. He was serving the North East Manchester group at the time, alongside the Revd Brian O'Neill.

When a new, purpose-built church opened on Edge Lane in 2013, the small URC congregation had already been worshipping regularly with the Methodists for some time. There was enthusiasm about investing financial resources and energy in a joint, three-way fellowship in new church premises.

Despite faithful commitment to this vision by a few members of all three denominations, the possible emergence of one, united congregation was not an idea which found strong support across the congregations.

At the end of March 2022, the United Reformed Church officially withdrew from active participation in The Church of the Epiphany, Droylsden having served formal notice of termination of the Sharing Agreement there.

Thus ended a journey which had begun with hopeful ecumenical expectations over 20 years earlier. True to our URC ethos, the departure was undertaken slowly and sensitively, to minimise the disruption to the life of Saint Andrews Church of England parish and Edge Lane Methodist Church. The fact that these congregations now continue to worship separately on Sunday mornings, in a building where the initial vision was of one URC/Anglican/Methodist congregation, says a lot about the unfulfilled hopes of unity there.

Even so, the United Reformed Church continued to play its part in building up the life of the Church in Droylsden through COTE. The denomination will continue to have a financial stake in the building and a concern for mission in that part of east Manchester.

Fulwood United Reformed Church, Preston

Fulwood URC started off as two separate churches: St Margaret's Presbyterian Church and Garstang Road Congregational Church.

St Margaret's church began in 1866, in hired rooms with an average congregation of 200. A permanent home in St Paul's Square opened in September 1878. In April 1894, the inaugural service of a congregational Sunday school in Fulwood was held. Land was obtained, a school and caretaker's house were built. The upper room of the school was reserved for church services.

In the early 1960s, discussions began about a merger with of the two churches. After further discussion, they began to worship together in January 1968 with the name: 'Garstang Road Congregational Church and St Margaret's Presbyterian Church of England'.

When the United Reformed Church was formed in 1972, the name was changed to 'Garstang Road United Reformed Church', and later to 'Fulwood United Reformed Church'.

In January 1988, the church was a founder member of 'Churches Together' in Fulwood and Broughton. Later that year, it was agreed that the building should be made more accessible by creating a single storey building with multi-purpose worship area/meeting room and two smaller meeting rooms.

In January 2005, members of the former Grimshaw St URC joined Fulwood. When the North West Synod formed missional partnerships, Fulwood URC became part of the Lancashire South partnership. Due to its position in the centre of the Synod, the church hosted Synod Committee meetings and various area meetings, events and trainings.

Due to a decreasing congregation, it was agreed that a closing service was held in January 2022.

Patricroft United Reformed Church, Eccles

In 1796, Joseph Rawson originated Congregationalism at Patricroft. Preaching began in a barn on Liverpool Road. Worship was then transferred to a room in the home of John Bates and a Sunday School was formed.

A chapel for public worship was built on Gorsey fields, which later became George Street. In 1869, the memorial stone of a new church was laid in Shakespeare Crescent. On Good Friday 1870, Patricroft Congregational Church was opened. Attached to the church was a large school building.

The church was a big building with stained glass windows, stone pillars, wooden carvings and brass plaques. It served the congregation for 100 years. However, it was cold, the roof leaked and the walls were beginning to move outwards.

In 1972, it was decided to demolish the building. The church officers negotiated with Barclays Bank to purchase a prefabricated building.

Later, the building was moved to Shakespeare Crescent, where it was erected, furnished and opened on Good Friday 1973. The URC was formed, it was agreed that Patricroft should join them.

In the early days of the URC, the church thrived with an active Sunday school and youth organisations. The large school building was used extensively by the community.

In more recent years, the congregation diminished in numbers. When Covid-19 lockdown closed the buildings, those elders left found it difficult to maintain and reopen them. The congregation decided to close the church in February 2022.

On 1 July 2021, there was a final celebration of church life taking place at Worsley Road URC in August.

Mersey Synod

Hamilton Memorial United Reformed Church, Claughton, Merseyside

Hamilton Memorial Presbyterian Church was founded in January 1868, beginning its life in a temporary hutted church, built in 16 days. A permanent building seating 600 was opened in November of the same year.

The name of the church was a tribute to the Revd James Hamilton of Regent Square, London and a memorial was added when the church moved to a new site after the First World War.

The plaque that recorded their sacrifice was placed over the door of the new building and, when the church was sold in 2018 to be replaced by Hamilton apartments (a three-storey block of flats run by the social housing arm of the local council), the plaque was replaced in the original stone wall that surrounded the site. People passing can read it and appreciate the sacrifice. The fellowship of the church remained together and moved across the road to St Bede's, a small Anglican chapel where they worshipped and, for some time, held Pilots too.

The church had a great history of youth work, holiday playschemes, a playgroup, Parents and Tots, Brownies, Pilots and provided a weekly coffee morning (which even had a delivery service to local shops), midweek communion, Lenten lunches, Women's work, tennis club, gym club, badminton club, drama club, music club, pantomimes… all within a suburban village.

Covid-19 placed an additional strain on the fellowship, who had no minister. The decision was made to close on 27 January 2022.

Minshull United Reformed Church, Crewe

In 1806 ,the Jackson brothers of Minshull Hill House held worship in their farmhouse. Two years, later there were eleven members.

In 1810, the building on Cross Lanes, Minshull Vernon was dedicated as a place of worship. As there were no state schools, it played a very important part in educating children from around the district. A schoolroom was built in 1884.

The only changes to the interior in its lifetime were the flooring from wooden blocks to concrete and carpet and electric lighting installed.

In 1938, the Minshull WI started at Cross Lanes, hosting jumble sales. At Christmas time, members would put on a pantomime, led mainly by Stan Robinson, the church's organist for over 50 years.

During 2006, (the church's 200th anniversary year) the church hosted a weekend history display including: church records, a Victorian lantern, photos of past events and personal historical items. Some members dressed in clothing from 1806.

During the summer months, the church offered games nights, quizzes, cards, dominoes, triominoes, beetle, etc in the schoolroom along with supper.

At one point, Minshull opened a charity shop in Crewe, which had become available rent free. They were given items to sell of every description from near and far. £3000 was raised in the three months and £1500 gifted to the local women's refuge. Minshull URC was known as 'the little church with a big heart'.

Twice a year, the church held specials services consisting of choir concerts of Union St, Baptist Church, Crewe, and the Christmas toy appeal for the Salvation Army of Crewe, whom they had a close relationship with for over 20 years.

It was said many times that there was something special within the church building: it was a home for people who found it difficult to find a home elsewhere. A feeling of love, peace and spirituality was ever present even at our final service on the 5 December 2022.

St George's United Reformed Church, Thornton Hough, Wirral

St George's was commissioned by industrialist William Hesketh Lever (later Lord Leverhulme) and designed by J Lomax-Simpson. It opened as St George's Congregational Church, before joining the URC in 1972.

The building was designed in a neo-Norman style, which was highly unusual for a non-conformist place of worship. It was constructed out of local red sandstone, with highly detailed carvings in both stone and wood (including a depiction of St George fighting a dragon).
The building lay physically at the heart of the village and the congregation was involved in the centre of village life: worshipping each week and hosting special events, including the annual Salvation Army band led carol concert.

In recent years, the church enjoyed a strong ecumenical relationship with All Saints Parish Church. The two congregations regularly worshipped together and undertook many joint events: from Bible studies and Lent groups, to social events and coffee mornings in support of the local food bank or Christian Aid.

The church was widely used for weddings, which the congregation viewed this as an important part of its ministry; seeking to bring both wedding couples and their family and friends into the wider life of the church.

St George's URC offered Christian witness and presence for over a century, and was blessed with many faithful, dedicated and talented members who served the church and Jesus Christ in a variety for over a century before taking the reluctant decision to close.

Yorkshire Synod

Christ Church with Trinity United Reformed Church, North Ferriby

No report given.

Eccleshill United Reformed Church, Bradford

Eccleshill URC was founded in north Bradford in 1823 as Salem Chapel, on what is now Chapel Lane in Eccleshill. As was the case with many chapels in the burgeoning towns and cities during the 19th century, the church became too small for the congregation. To which end, in 1889 a new chapel was built on Victoria Road, although the burial ground and Sunday School were retained. This 'new' chapel was replaced with the final building in 1967, with the old Sunday School building being demolished at this time.

In its heyday, the church was a major focal point for the Eccleshill community, including some key Bradford Woollen manufacturers, as well as enjoying a close relationship with the former Yorkshire Congregational College.

Sadly, with a rapidly reducing congregation and membership, it was decided that the cause had run its course and the church closed its doors on 9 June 2021, with the remaining members joining with other local URC congregations.

It is hoped that the remaining burial ground will be cared for by a dedicated group of local folk, and Yorkshire Synod wishes them every blessing in this.

Pickering United Reformed Church, Pickering

Pickering URC was formed by a group of individuals who left the established church in 1788, after their evangelical vicar was replaced by one who did not concur with the views of his predecessor. So successful were they as a cause that they built their first chapel on Hungate in 1793 and there they stayed, with enlargements to the chapel in 1814 and 1839.

Quietly and effectively, the church, firstly as a Congregational, then as United Reformed, served the small town of Pickering and the wider Ryedale area of North Yorkshire. As with many churches, the Covid-19 pandemic meant that the viability of the cause and the upkeep of their now Grade II listed building was stretched to the limit. So on 11 May 2021, the decision

was made to close, with the remaining members joining with the other churches in Pickering to enable the Gospel to be maintained in that place.

East Midlands Synod

Anstey United Reformed Church, Anstey

The church came into being in 1851, when services were held in a small cottage on the top green.

Ten years later, a factory was purchased for the grand sum of £130 on the same site as the present church. The church flourished and numbers increased. A new congregational church was built on the same site and dedicated on 1 July 1879.

On one Sunday in 1910, 105 people received the sacraments when Holy Communion was celebrated at morning service.

In 1928, the Anstey Congregational Dramatic society was formed. They lasted for over 50 years. Many village people shared fellowship and happy times viewing the concerts and plays which were produced.

Like all churches, numbers fluctuated from time to time. By 1965, the Sunday school numbers had declined such that the morning worship was rearranged and called ‘Family Worship’ and ‘Sunday School’ became ‘Junior Church’. The children shared the first part of morning worship with their family, before leaving for their classes.

In 1972, Anstey united with the Church of Scotland (Presbyterians) and the Church of Christ to form the new United Reformed Church. The church meeting voted in favour of joining, with 22 in favour and three against.

The church continued serving the community with an evening midweek fellowship group, led by the presiding minister, and a welcome club which met on Thursday afternoons. This was so popular, with a regular attendance of 80 people, that they had a waiting list for new members. A young wives group met every Thursday evening, later being named the Thursday Group (as it was no longer young!), which only finished with the pandemic and the subsequent church closure after 50 years in existence.

A mother and toddler group and a youth group were part of the church outreach for many years. They had holiday club during the 1970s and 1980s, which, in one year, had well over 100 children.

The annual church outings between 1982 and 2002 attracted great interest and were open to all village folk, not just church members. They helped to bring the community together. The trips were varied: visits to Eton College, Windsor, the Lake District, Norfolk Broads, Eastbourne, Holmforth (Last of the Summer Wine country), Hatton Country Park, Southampton, etc.

Sunday evening services were poorly attended and were discontinued.

The church supported Christian Aid annually and, apart from door to door collections, encouraged participation in the Christian Aid 25 mile walk.

In 2012, two church members formed the Anstey URC sequence dance club on Wednesday evenings, 7-9pm. This continued until Covid-19 forced it to be discontinued.

The church endeavoured to play an active role in village life with weekly services, varied fellowship, coffee mornings, recreational groups, May fairs, toy services and Christmas bazaars. It played its part in 'Churches Together in Anstey', a joint venture with other churches to share worship and maintain a high profile as a Christian Community in the village.

Many Anstey people have fond memories of attending the Sunday School and taking part in Church Anniversaries and outings – but fond memories don't keep a church viable.

It is with great sadness that Anstey URC announced that it had closed. Formerly known as Anstey Congregational Church or simply 'the Congs' it has been a much loved part of village life since its foundation 170 years ago.

There appears to be a lack of interest in the village of things spiritual and Christian. We are sad but not despairing because we believe that God is still in control; still has an overview of the world. We take comfort too from the words of Jesus:- 'I am with you always, even unto the end of the world' (Matthew 28 v 20)

Badby United Reformed Church, Daventry

No report given.

Headlands United Reformed Church, Northampton

The foundation of the Headlands Church was laid in 1940 by the newly formed Northampton group of congregational churches, which saw the need for a church in the rapidly developing eastern part of Northampton resulting from the increasing success of the shoe trade.

On 2 February 1941, they opened a Sunday school in the Bushland Road school. Bushland Road school began Sunday evening services on 4 May 1941.

Despite the Second World War, the venture flourished and, in 1944, The Headlands Congregational Church was officially formed. In 1942, the Revd Hilda Pettman had been appointed by the group to preach at the Headlands and became its first minister.

A site for the church was sought and the builder, Alderman H A Glenn, made a generous offer of a large site (37,000 square feet) opposite Bushland Road for £800. This was accepted, but, sadly, no building was allowed because of the shortage of resources at that time. However, a temporary building (a YMCA hut) was acquired and erected on the site in 1946.

The church continued to flourish and, in 1955, a permanent, concrete prefabricated building was erected and attached to the original hut. A further brick extension was erected in the early 1970s, with a large hall that could be subdivided into separate rooms.

The church became part of the United Reformed Church in 1972, at its founding.

Youth organisations have formed a lively part of church life, with large numbers of Scouts, Guides and their younger age groups filling church rooms with their regular activities. Church parades and Christmas services led to a full church, with parents and families joining in.

The late 1960s and 1970s were the most successful years, with regular Sunday family services, with children attending their own classes during the sermon. At that time, there were two junior choirs. In the afternoon, there was Sunday school and, later, an evening service with a choir.

The large car park proved useful, allowing the church to be used for pastorate services and Synod meetings. Until the last few years, Headlands URC was a successful, outgoing church,

used regularly by (in addition to their own youth organisations) a variety of clubs, organisations, dance groups, birthday celebrations, parties and even local elections.

Headlands URC helped set up the Northampton forum of URC churches, to provide help for one another whenever needed. This helped, when numbers fell. With little chance of a minister of their own, they obtained the help of stipendiary ministers.

In recent years, the aging congregation has dwindled and, following the recent pandemic and several resignations, the church was no longer able to carry out the normal functions needed to keep going.

It was with regret the decision was made to close the church.

Paulerspury United Reformed Church, Towcester

The church was erected in 1826, under the guidance of the Minister from Towcester Congregational Church.

In the autumn of 1841, Mr Buckingham was asked to preach in the evenings during the week.

In 1842, Mr Buckingham was asked to lead the chapel. A Sunday school was formed and by 1843 there were 200 children in attendance.

The congregation grew, so the chapel added two side balconies (a back balcony that held the organ had already been built).

The land around the church was consecrated as a burial ground in 1843 and, on the 28 February 1844, the chapel became a full church. The service was led by the Revd Hawkins from Towcester, the Revd Slye from Potterspury, the Revd Bull from Newport Pagnell and the Revd Wager from Stony Stratford.

Mr Buckingham was ordained as minister on the 24 November 1847.
In 1850, a school room was added at a cost of £150, and the upper adjoining wall was removed to allow space in the school room for people to see into the church.

By the turn of the century, there were 72 communicants, 159 Sunday school children and 40 teachers.

On 5 October 1972, Paulerspury became a member of the United Reformed Church.

In September 1991, a new minister was appointed: the Revd Hazel Whitehead. Her mission was to build up the churches at Potterspury and Yardley Gobion, and to gently close the church at Paulerspury which only had five members left.

Within 18 months, the Revd Whitehead had made contact with all the non-conformist families in the village, who went elsewhere to worship. On Sunday 21 March 1993, a meeting was held to make a plan to update the church. Over the next six weeks, eight adults, plus three venture scouts, washed, dusted, hoovered, painted, plastered, moved pews and generally blitzed the building. They also did a mailshot to the entire village.

During this time, the minister was taken ill with what subsequently turned out to be secondary cancer. At the end of July, minister Hazel died. Five days later, their eldest member, Peter Hugman, also died. At this point, the congregation could have given up, but Hazel had appointed a presiding Elder and a church council. With the guidance of the Revd Roger Whitehead (Hazel's husband) and the Holy Spirit's help, the entire church family continued the re-growth.

They erected “God’s Tent” (a false roof suspended from the roof to the top of the balcony). They were given an electric organ by Towcester Baptist Church. They installed a kitchen, two crosses and a lectern (made from one of the old pews), the walls and roof were mended, the building was re-wired and new lights put in.

The school-room (which was derelict) was entirely re-done. Downstairs and outside, a big ‘pub’ sign was erected.

Outside, the graveyard was cleared of rubble, weeds and brambles so people could see the gravestones and an old path was discovered under the grass and weeds.

The Victorian heating system at the rear of the church was demolished, as were various ‘toilets’.

A few years later, Paulerspury URC bought a piece of land at the back of the churchyard from the council and knocked the yard wall down to extend the graveyard.

All the exterior walls had been re-pointed. Under the umbrella of the URC, the congregation came from Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, Plymouth Brethren, Salvation Army and URC membership. Together, they formed an exciting, caring and welcoming church family.

When Hazel died, the church sent Sue Litchfield to train as a minister. On the 21 February 1998, she was ordained and inducted as minister of Paukerspury URC.

In the year 2000, the quinquennial report showed that the rear wall of the chapel had moved and the building was condemned. A forth wall was built, but the money had run out before they could be decorated. Both side balconies had been removed, plus the pews, a solid floor put down and gas central heating. Services could once again be held and everyone who came were invited to write their names on the new wall. Their names forever to be ‘in the house of the Lord’.

At the end of 2010, the chapel was re-plastered, painted and new lights installed. The Revd Sue Litchfield retired in 2012 and the congregation had half glazed doors installed between the vestibule and the chapel, plus a new fence, gate and notice board.

The church’s aim was always to extend a welcome both to occasional visitors and to new members. It is now empty and awaiting to be sold.

Westcotes United Reformed Church, Leicester

The former church was built in 1906 and became the Sunday School rooms following the current building being completed in 1922.

In 1957, when London Road Congregational Church closed, the church was presented with the three manual pipe organ.

In the early 1980s, with a small congregation of around 25, the church began looking at becoming a united church with St Andrew’s Methodist Church. However, following discussions, it was agreed that these two churches served two worshipping communities which were not within walking distance of each other, so no further progress was made.

The church was struggling with the upkeep of such a large building, so in 1989 they began to look at the possibility of a site being used for a new church building, alongside a sheltered housing complex. Due to funding cuts, the project did not materialise. The church was looking at closure.

In 1996, they formed a sharing agreement for a number of years with The Kingdom Faith Ministries and, through these rents, were able to move forward continuing their work in the local community.

During 2004, the church was blessed with the arrival of Mr John Shaw (a local church leader) who worked with the members to try and develop the church. However, the work was hindered when a fire occurred on 8 December 2008. It destroyed the Sunday School room and connecting corridor to the church. A decision was made that this section of the building be demolished.

The members carried on their work in the community and were supported by rental income from The Redeemed Christian Church of God, who have rented the premises since 2015. Over recent years, the number of aged members at the church have continued to decrease. In February 2021, Mr John Shaw died. The church was left with just four members, who were not in a position to keep the church going. A decision was therefore made at the East Midlands Synod meeting in March 2021 that the church would close on 27 April 2021.

We give thanks to God for the faithful worship and witness of Westcotes United Reformed Church over the years, and the lives touched through its work.

West Midlands Synod

Bridgenorth United Reformed and Methodist Church, Bridgenorth

No report given.

Halesowen United Reformed Church, Halesowen

The old church was demolished and work on the present building started in 1960. It was built onto an existing building that had been built as a Sunday school in 1910, becoming the church hall.

Halesowen URC successfully joined with a Methodist Church in 1984. The ground floor of the hall was refurbished but were unable to develop the upper floor due to insufficient funds. So, it remained in its original state with no access other than by ladder.

Every year, the church was sent advent candles from Germany. This was a gift from a former German soldier who found himself in Halesowen during the war and was shown great kindness.

A welcome group was formed by a small group of worshippers from churches in the town, who were concerned about the welfare of asylum seekers and refugees. Halesowen URC offered them the use of the hall free of charge. They met once a week where they were given help and friendship.

The building regularly hosted the ‘Women’s World Day of Prayer’ gathering for Halesowen, and was often the venue for The Global Justice Group – which both the chair and secretary were members.

Prior to lockdown, the hall was used every weekday for dance club, tai chi, Bible study, friendship club, Girls Brigade, mother and toddler group, cancer support group, bridge club, karate club and the shoppers coffee morning.

Newent United Reformed Church, Newent, Gloucestershire

On 6 May 1846, the Newent Congregational Chapel opened. It was built to seat 300 worshippers. The first pastor was the Revd John F Guennett.

In November 1971, an important church meeting was held to decide on the proposed union between Congregational and Presbyterian Churches. The proposition was agreed. The United Reformed Church was subsequently formed by a Uniting Declaration on October 5 1972. Thus, Newent Congregational Chapel became the Newent United Reformed Church.

Over the years, the church has been able to join in activities with other churches in the town. They have also been able to assist other churches when they have had to have work on their buildings done. The building was shared and the churches appreciated the help during those times.

The church had to close, to much sadness, and the final service took place on 28 February 2022.

Potters Green United Reformed Church

In 1816, Potters Green was a hamlet of eleven cottages about four miles outside Coventry. Most of the men were coal miners or farm labourers, and the people were said to be, 'in a heathenish state'. One day, a small group of men came from Vicar Lane Church (now Warwick Road) to hold an outdoor service in the village of Walsgrave. They carried a quantity of religious tracts, and as they passed through Potters Green gave some to the children playing there. The Vicar of St Mary's heard that they were coming and encouraged his men to disrupt the meeting, pelting them with eggs and rotten vegetables.

As they retreated through Potters Green, the children ran after them and begged they that they would return and teach them to read as other children did. They talked to the parents and promised they would be back the following week. From this small beginning, a Sunday School was started in one of the cottages,

Not long after, an evening meeting was started for adults, and one or other of the men from Vicar Lane Congregational Church took the services which were held every Sunday. The cottage was soon much too small to hold the numbers that attended. Four years later, in 1820, the Potters Green Chapel was built and registered as a church, the money being raised through a system of subscriptions with help from Vicar Lane. It seems amazing that people who had so little were able to build the chapel so soon after that first historic visit.

The church was growing fast and was the centre of the spiritual and social life in the area. People would walk miles from Shilton, Ansty and other local hamlets to take part. It was becoming apparent that there was a need for more room for all its meetings. They could not extend as there were three tiny cottages next to the church, and so the church meeting decided to take out a loan and purchase a piece of ground on the corner of Potters Green Road and Woodway Lane, where there was a damson orchard. And so the schoolroom was built in 1892, and people were glad to raise the money needed to pay off the loan.

The schoolroom was a great asset for the church and for the people in the area. In 1893, a class was started for the local miners and farm labourers to teach them to read, an opportunity they had never had when they were children. They worked six days a week, and so the Potters Green Early Morning Adult Men's School met on a Sunday morning before the services took place. It was very popular and grew to a membership of over 60. Miners would walk down from long hours on the night shift before going home to sleep. Then they would be back for the evening service.

The children's Sunday School grew and flourished, until there were 110 members at the turn of the century. In those days, there was little organised entertainment such as we know it today, and the social life at the church met a real need in the life of the community. There were social evenings three nights a week and there was always something on a Saturday night.

Plans for commemorating the Centenary of the Sunday School in 1916 were delayed by the First World War. It was not until the war ended that a banner was eventually made to celebrate the centenary, Easter was the highlight of the year. Easter Mondays began with a cooked breakfast of bacon and boiled eggs, the banner was paraded round the district; people came out of their houses and joined the procession. A service was followed by distribution of cake and orange to the children, who seldom saw such luxuries.

The end of June was the Sunday School Anniversary. All the children had new or best clothes, and sang to the adults. Visiting preachers came to preach 'The Sermons', as they were called. People came from Lenten's Lane, Shilton, Walsgrave, Wyken. There were so many people that the services were held outside, right across Woodway Lane. It was not the busy road we know today, and in any case everybody was there. There was quite a season for 'The Sermons'. As each church had their own anniversary so all the other churches would go to support them. They were very important occasions in the social life of the area.

In 1966, the Ter-Centenary of the Sunday School was celebrated. By then, housing estates had started to spring up. Potters Green Primary School started with a class in our schoolroom. Potters Green, was no longer the country area it had been. It was in 1931 that Walsgrave and Potters Green became part of the city of Coventry. The biggest employers were the car factories and for most it was the end of an era. Children were no longer eager to go to school, and so the Sunday School became the Junior Church where adults and children met together on Sunday mornings and separated into groups for learning at their own level.

In the 1990's, ecumenical relations became closer. A local Council of Churches was formed, including three Anglican Churches; a Baptist, Roman Catholic and Potters Green URC. Meetings were regular and several events were held together. On Good Fridays there was a Walk of Witness, stopping at each of the churches with a hymn and prayer and culminating with a short service and tea and hot cross buns. We had joint services, and once we had a service of Holy Communion at our church, attended by the bishop of Coventry. We became particularly close to our neighbours at St Philip's Church. Besides inviting each other to all our special occasions, we went to the local old people's home together for a monthly service. A highlight was the Millennium Project, in 1999-2000, which consisted of fundraising for 'Send a Cow', a charity started by farmers which supplied cows to villages in poor countries. It caught the imagination and raised money for a small herd of cows.

Ecumenical relations stretched further, with the advent of immigrant groups to Coventry. The first to join us was a Church from Kenya; then a Romanian Church which still worships on our premises. The Seventh Day Advents worship on Saturday and Indian Church, led by Pastor Giji Thomas, on Sunday mornings. Giji and his wife became part of our Church when they took membership. Since then, we have got to know them well. From small beginnings he has grown a thriving church with children and young people, and frequently leads our worship. His Church is hands-on involved with maintenance of the buildings, and has installed modern audio and visual technology.

Over the years we have been joined into different groups. We were part of the East Coventry Group for 40 years. Changing circumstances within the Coventry URC in 2006 led to us joining a pastorate with Warwick Road and Foleshill Road – back with our original 'Mother Church'. In 2015, we became part of the North Coventry Group which brings us up to this day. Sadly our numbers have slowly declined until, with the present ministerial problems, we are no longer viable and made the difficult decision to close in June 2022.

Warwick Road United Reformed Church

Coventry grew from Roman times, and in the 8th Century a Church was built for Leofric and Lady Godiva. By the 14th Century Coventry was considered to be the centre of the Midlands

for Lollards with 13 plus executed. The 15th Century received the Royal Court and had several religious houses (Greyfriars, Whitefriars, Carthusians and two places of pilgrimages) but in the 17th Century Coventry refused entry to Charles I and the expression “sent to Coventry” arose.

By the 18th Century weaving predominated with William Bird employing 2000 individuals in a population of approx. 12000.

In 1724 Alderman John Moore, a wealthy butcher and owner of the Cross Keys Public House gave land in the rear, plus Trusts, for the building of a 700 seat Chapel to be built and known as

Vicar Lane Chapel but in1777 a section of the congregation broke away to form West Orchard Chapel then in the centre of Coventry.

In 1820 John Sibree came as a student minister. He stayed until 1858 during which time the Chapel was increased to receive 1200 worshippers with Sunday and Day School Rooms having space for 600 scholars.

1876 saw Henry Bottomley accepting the call. Prior to this he was trained at Lloyds Bank.

1886 due to a legacy, some land at Warwick Row, Warwick Road was purchased and in 1889 on 15th May the foundation stone was laid by Mr W.H. Wills, the Liberal MP for Coventry.

1891 on 27th January was the first service.

Income for the church came from the letting of Vicar Lane to Moys the Grocers, besides extra giving within the Church. Indeed, the Building Fund was “extinguished” by February 1897.

1907 on 2nd July Miss Burdett was appointed as the first paid Deaconess

1924 was the 200th anniversary of the founding of Vicar Lane Chapel and the installation of Maurice Watts as Minister.

1931 saw the building of a new Church Hall, which was completed in July 1932 and known as Sibree Hall.

In 1938 Leslie Cooke became Minister and his name became nationally known as the BBC asked him to broadcast to North America and the Pacific on religious life and Coventry’s war experience. He also had interest in the London Missionary Society with four people from Warwick Road, Joseph Hardie, Merlin Cole, Mary Kibble and Barbara Lea working for them. He left us in 1947 to become General Secretary of the Congregational Union.

WWII saw the complete destruction of Vicar Lane and West Orchard Chapels and it wasn’t until 1948 Revd Hugh Jones arrived with the need to “repair” both the Church and congregations. Up until then there had been 3 congregations using the on building at Warwick Road. 1947 saw West Orchard move to their new Church at Baginton Road, and in 1953.

Holyhead Road Church was built replacing the bombed chapels in Well Street and Vine Street. BBC radio broadcasts continued.

Both Vicar Lane and Warwick Road were looking at the needs of Coventrians across the city and firstly being involved with the building of Potters Green Church (built in 1820), the building of Stoke Church, the Chapels of Well Street and Vine Street. Also, Brownshill Green Church on the outskirts and in the 1950’s became responsible for Village Churches at Brandon, Bretford and Stretton-under-Fosse but by then the need to establish a Church on the new estate of Willenhall became the priority.

From the beginning education was at the forefront with Sunday School not only teaching Christianity but also the 3R's, (which was the reason Potters Green Church was built).

In the last quarter of the 19th Century many societies were formed:- Vicar Lane Young Mens Association, Warwick Road Mutual Improvement Society, a cricket eleven, Warwick Road Cycling Club, Young Men's Bible Class, Pleasant Monday Evening Meetings, and also music came into Church life with a choir and music concerts.

During the twentieth Century Scouts and Guides groups, a Young Wives Club, Youth Club, a Drama Club (often with the Minister involved), a Day Club (for pensioners), a Play Club (for toddlers), a Beavers Colony, a Tuesday Club.

1956 saw the first BBC television service from Warwick Road.

1962 David Dale was appointed Minister and was involved with more repairs to the Church buildings but also heavily involved with the pastorate.

1968 saw the appointment of the first woman assistant Minister, Valerie Dinning.

1972 saw the change to Warwick Road Reformed Church with the formation of the United Reformed Church.

1973 Roger Hall was appointed and was soon working with both ATV and the local radio, Mercia Sound. He was involved with both City centre stores and working together with the Churches within the Inner Ring Road.

1989 Stuart Jackson returned to the Church as Minister. He was previously Assistant Minister from 1965 to 1968. He looked at what buildings we had and how a change could benefit the Church. Task forces of members were formed.

2001 Rowena Francis was the first woman Minister and oversaw the end of a major building programme culminating with the car park and Sibree Hall becoming flats and 10 Warwick Row became a Church Office and Church Hall with outreach into the Community.

2008 Yvonne Stone became our Minister. However, with declining Ministers in Coventry had to become involved with other URC congregations, culminating in being responsible for both West Orchard Church and Warwick Road, both on the south side of Coventry.

During the 2019 pandemic an approach was made to hire Warwick Road Church by a growing church. Mosaic, for use on Sundays but this was eventually changed to discussing

the possibility of buying the sanctuary. After some time and effort an offer was made and accepted and solicitors involved. Mosaic wish to work with the URC in the Warwick Road Centre to continue the outreach there.

Both the congregations of Warwick Road and West Orchard thought the time had come to merge and work as one. After discussions and church meetings the decision was taken to create a new church on the Baginton Road site and from 1st January 2022 Baginton Road URC the two churches became one.

Welsh Frankton United Reformed Church, Welsh Frankton

No report given.

Wolstanton United Reformed Church, Newcastle-under-Lyme

Since 1902, the church was known as Wolstanton Congregational Church until 1972, when the name was changed to Wolstanton United Reformed Church.

In the early years, the church was full every Sunday, and had an active Sunday school. The church held weekly activities, including afternoon tea, as well as spring and Christmas fayres. The church rooms were also let out for outside events. As Sunday activities opened, the attendance to church dwindled.

When their organist passed away, followed by the leader of our church, the small congregation continued to run the church.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Wolstanton URC closed and locked down like everywhere else. With no money coming in and high overheads, the church could not cope. The Elders could not make the buildings safe without the funds which were needed.

The final service was held in August 2021. The church was full! Oh, how we wished it could have been like that every Sunday. There were lots of tears – not only from our congregation but from visitors who came from all over the UK, who had connections with Wolstanton from childhood.

Eastern Synod

Trinity United Reformed Church, Harlow

The origin of Trinity URC goes back to the Second World War, when many churches were destroyed by enemy action. Compensation was paid, but owing to changing population trends, not all would be rebuilt.

Harlow was designated as a ‘new town’ and the development corporation approached church organisations to ascertain if they were interested in the acquisition of land for the building of churches. The then Presbyterian Church decided to construct one in Harlow. Finance came from war damage funds and a contribution from Frognal Presbyterian Church, Hampstead. The latter played a large part in establishing Trinity Church.

The Revd Nicol advertised a Presbyterian service to outline proposals for a new church. Only five attended this service. He persevered with more services and built up a support group of twenty. A church committee was set up, with a secretary and treasurer.

The Revd Nicol accepted a call for Penang. Fortunately, retired minister the Revd MacGregor took his place, taking responsibility for preaching and building up support before the church was constructed.

Building of the church commenced in 1955. Accommodation was provided for 250, with classrooms for Sunday school.

The first service in the church was held on the 5 February 1956. It snowed, and 40 people were in attendance.

The official opening of the church was held on the 15 September 1956. This was combined with the appointment of the first minister, the Revd Forsyth.

The early days were a struggle with low funds and the need to provide all the furnishings and fittings.

Membership increased and peaked to 143 in 1965. There were approximately 200 children at the Sunday school, requiring 12 teachers. The church had a youth section, Scouts, Guides and a choir.

An organ was acquired in 1960 and served until 1985, when it was replaced.

Colonel and Mrs Gilmour were major contributors to the church. He was the chief engineer in the development corporation responsible for the building of roads. He donated a stained glass window, one of the most striking features of the church. In the centre of the glass is the burning bush, this is surrounded by images of the four gospels. Colonel Gilmour also donated the hall, a later addition, as well as the communion table and minster`s chair.

The second minister was the Revd Lewis, who held controversial views with many letters in the local press. When he accepted another calling, the church was without a minister for two years. The Revd Melvin was later appointed minister for the three URC churches in Harlow and Roydon.

In subsequent years, church attendance declined. Members of the congregation died or moved away and were not replaced. The impact of Covid-19 resulted in members not returning to the church.

The hope was that the church would continue permanently as a place of worship. It would be a tragedy if the building, and the stained glass window, were demolished.

South Western Synod

Langport United Reformed Church, Langport

Langport was opened in 1829.

In 1936, it joined with eight other local congregational churches to become part of the newly formed Mid-Somerset group, with two full time ministers.

By 1986, the group settled into five churches in 1986.

Langport was, for many years, a key part of the local Christians Together: regularly hosting meals and being the place where the Good Friday walk of witness finished for coffee and hot cross buns.

Food was a large part of the ministry of Langport, producing Sunday lunches for not only those in church but for members of the local community.

In recent years, it was home to local flower shows, an exhibition of Bibles and a live nativity: where a stable was built in the front garden and church folk from the wider group played key roles in the tableau.

Over the years, the congregation took great care of the property: opening up the entrance with new glass doors and refurbishing the hall at the back.

In the last couple of years, numbers did fall away and the prolonged closure due to Covid-19 restrictions caused much heart searching about our ability to continue.

Closing on 31 August 2021 was not taken lightly, and, although sad, it was the right decision for Langport URC.

Newquay United Reformed Church, Newquay

In 1880, a covenanted fellowship was formed and a new church building opened in 1888. The church known as Newquay Congregational Church was destroyed by fire in 1924.
Following faithful hard work and fundraising, the present building was opened in 1928. The church has maintained a gospel witness in the town of Newquay for nearly 100 years on the basis of sound Bible teaching and doctrine.

In 1972, the members resolved to join the newly established denomination of the United Reformed Church.

During the last ten years, members have expressed concern that the URC was moving away from doctrinal truths. As a result, the members unanimously resolved to separate from the denomination and become an independent fellowship.

On 1st June 2018, a new charity was registered with the Charities Commission known as Newquay Evangelical Church. Following amicable talks and negotiations, the URC South West Synod agreed to sell the church buildings to the new charity. The church buildings comprise the original church building, together with the adjoining building known as The Beacon of Light. Unfortunately, the fellowship was not in a position to make an offer to purchase the manse. The Church continues to thrive as an independent fellowship.

Uffculme United Reformed Church, Uffculme

Crossways chapel was considered to be a hospital church, as many who had joined them had been through difficult circumstances or sickness; many having their lives turned around.

From the early 1980s, Crossway had two ladies join from South West Youth Ministries (SWYM), one from South Korea and the other from Uganda. Both went on to achieve much for the Lord in their own countries.

The church was involved with Saltmine Trust, hosting local raft races, a Robertsbridge youth camp, a Bush Camp near Crediton, a Bible club and youth club. They supported large youth events that took place at the local senior school with as many as 600 attending.

The church had a Sunday School and provided baptisms by full immersion in the sea and river.

Prior to the pandemic, Crossways Chapel hosted a large collection of activities including: coffee mornings, foodbanks, bookshops, Uffculme amateur dramatics, a railway club, monthly community lunches, United prayer breakfasts (with St Mary and Baptists), Word for Today, Christian Friends of Israel, Street Pastors, Rehoboth Orphanage in the Philippines and catering for the local farmer’s market.

The church would participate in local care home services, visit local primary school, subside a baby and toddler group and distributed 200 Good Newspapers.

At the time of closure, Crossways Chapel had 22 members.

Wessex Synod

Chandler's Ford United Reformed Church, Chandler's Ford

Chandlers Ford United Reformed Church has been in existence for over 90 years. It began as a Congregational Church under the ministry of the Revd Daniel Lloyd Jones in 1928 and ended with the Revd Mark Robinson in 2021.

During that time, it was a thriving church serving the community, including a youth club from 1934, annual holiday clubs, all age junior church groups and uniformed groups such as boys brigade and scouts.

In 1937, the church held its first recorded young people's parade service with their own boys brigade and recently formed guides company.

During the Second World War, in 1940, the sanctuary was taken over by the education authority to be used as a school.

As the building grew, it was used by groups that benefitted the community: the craft group, INSKIP, playgroup, after school club, Brownies, Guides and church social events.

As part of the international outreach programme, the church was involved with Bethel Church in Zambia and St Stephens Children's Orphanage in Kenya. They provided funding, sponsorship and visits to support work on much needed projects such as cleaning, painting and small building tasks.

On 19 October 2019, the church held a celebration party to mark its 90th birthday.

On 20 June 2021, due to an ageing congregation and increasing costs of maintenance of the buildings, the difficult decision was taken to close the church for worship.

The closure was marked by a celebration service on the 4 September 2021, led by the Revd Mark Robinson. It was attended by members of the congregation past and present, past ministers and members of the Synod.

Hope United Reformed Church, Freshwater Bay, Isle of Wight

The Congregational Church in Freshwater Bay began its life in the 1880s, as the community quickly grew after Queen Victoria made a home on the island and then Alfred Tennyson moved to the nearby Farringford House.

The congregation began to develop and a lecture hall was built in 1894 for the growing Sunday school. In the 1960s, this was demolished and a new hall was built.

Being in a prime tourist area, the congregation was pleased to welcome many visitors over the years.

After the war years, the church flourished under the leadership of pastor John Dimmer, who came for a three month visit, yet stayed for 27 years. He arrived whilst undergoing training and was ordained some years later.

Several retired ministers led the church until 2003, after which the congregation prayerfully sought another pastor without success. They relied on lay leadership and the support of the ministers at Ryde and Shanklin until the Isle of Wight URC group was formed in 2014.

The church took an active part in West Wight Churches Together, and enjoyed the ministry of many friends from various denominations leading services. A Bible study and prayer group met regularly on Thursdays, which was the backbone of the church in recent years.

The congregation faced possible closure after the death of the Church Secretary, Rosemary Willis, who had faithfully kept things running for several decades. New leadership emerged and the church enjoyed some further happy years of ministry, taking on the new name Hope Church. The loss of several members in the last couple of years left the church without local leadership, so the hard decision was made to close on 31 December 2021.

Longfleet United Reformed Church, Poole
No report given.

Walkford United Reformed Church, Walkford, Christchurch
No report given.

Thames North Synod

Holtspur United Reformed Church, Beaconsfield
The Holtspur Church began as a Sunday School, founded in 1937 by the members of the Beaconsfield Congregational Church. The 20 children met in a sports pavilion until it was requisitioned for evacuees in 1939 (they then met in several different homes).

Adult worship was added sometime later and, in 1946, a temporary building was opened in North Drive with a morning Sunday School. and evening worship.

In 1956, there was major development in the Holtspur area and a site for a new congregational church was obtained in Crabtree Close. The building was opened in 1961.

Although not constitutionally a separate church from Beaconsfield, the Holtspur congregation established its own church meetings and financial accounts. However, there was one minister between the churches and only one deacon representing the interests of the Holtspur congregation at deacons' meetings.

With declining numbers of children during the 1980s, the children's work came to a close, whilst the adult congregation of between 20 and 30 remained static.

In 1995, with the approval of the Beaconsfield church and the district council, the Holtspur congregation became a separate local church of the United Reformed Church, inducting its own lay leader.

The lay leader endeavored to help the church members grow into an independent local church. Although this proved a struggle at times, the congregation was very loyal and willing.

In 1998, the church called an associate minister in a 'cluster' sharing arrangement with the URC: churches at Cores End and Burnham The agreement gave 20% of the Minister's time to Holtspur in support of the lay leader's 20 hours per week.

In 1999, the Holtspur URC lay leader relinquished her post and the Beaconsfield pastorate became vacant. The district council proposed that the Beaconsfield and Holtspur churches should share a minister.

The Holtspur was divided on an 80/20 basis, where the minister would provide spiritual and pastoral leadership, he would chair church meetings and Elders' meetings and conduct at least eight Sunday services per year. The associate minister would withdraw when a new minister had been inducted.

Over recent years, as with many churches, membership has both aged and significantly declined. In 2014, the two churches were joined with Burnham URC in a three church sharing agreement. This resulted in the Holtspur's minister allocation being reduced to six worship Sundays a year.

Fortunately, the Holtspur congregation has had the benefit of a small number of retired professionals from industry who have managed both the worship and buildings aspects of the church's weekly life over the past 20 years. There have been number of retired ministers and lay preachers, who have helped maintain the fellowship.

Due to dwindling support, flower festivals, harvest suppers, garden parties and special services had become difficult to manage.

With the Covid-19 pandemic forcing church closures, the remaining members made the decision to cease the church's activities and close.

Southern Synod

Speer Road United Reformed Church, Thames Ditton

No report given.

Synod of Wales

Hebron Mostyn United Reformed Church, Flint

Since May 1874, when a plot of land had become available near the station and docks on the main coast road, congregations had worshipped at Halendy English Congregational Chapel.

For 93 years, the buildings remained substantially the same. It was forced to close when the whole of the village was moved up to the Maes Pennant Estate, about a mile or so from the chapel.

The new (and current) church building was opened and dedicated on 31 October 1967. At that time, the enthusiastic members continued their efforts and other improvements were carried out: a new porch, schoolroom, wall, railings and double gates were erected. The heating system was updated and the building double glazed.

The church was a focal point in the village, but numbers attending have slowly declined. However, it was full when its 50th anniversary was celebrated in 2017, with a Thanksgiving Service followed by a buffet.

Hebron URC held coffee mornings, as well as an annual Sankey Singing Festival and Carol Service. In the latter days, there were only five female members and it became too difficult to continue, though support had been given from other churches in the Region.

Over 145 years of faithful Christian witness unfortunately ended on 17 July 2021, when Hebron United Reformed Church (based in Maes Pennant, Mostyn) held its final Service of Thanksgiving for the life and witness of the congregation, in their church grounds.

There is another United Reformed Church in the North Wales Region, which some folk will attend.

New Bethel United Reformed Church, Abercarn, Newport

Established in 1758 by members of nearby Llanvaches, the chapel was rebuilt in 1855 and known as New Bethel from that time. Originally independent, they joined the Congregational Church and became part of the URC on its establishment in 1972.

Once a thriving church, at one time hosting a day school in their schoolroom providing education to local children, changing population patterns have had a huge effect due to its isolated, rural location. The congregation has dwindled in recent years, with the few remaining members unable to undertake the necessary work to maintain it.

The chapel closed with a service of celebration on Sunday 12 December 2021, led by the Revd Simon Walkling, Moderator of the National Synod of Wales.

The building has been transferred to a local resident who plans to use it for community events.

Talgarth United Reformed Church, Brecon

Based in the former Bethlehem Presbyterian Church of Wales building, Talgarth United Free Church was founded in 2010, bringing together local Presbyterian, Baptist and United Reformed Church congregations under the ministry of the Revd Michael Alan Hodgson and the Revd Gregory Thompson.

Part of the Brecon Beacons pastorate, the congregation was small but active, and hosted regular afternoon teas and Bible studies. Wanting to strengthen community links and embed themselves as a community hub, they first explored moving to a more modern building and then re-developing their existing home.

In the past few years, they have endured the loss of several key active members of the congregation, with others aging and unable to be as active as they had been. The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated this and lead to the recognition that the work of the chapel in Talgarth over many years was complete, and that God’s work would be taken forward in future by other means.

The church closed on 31 July 2021.

Synod of Scotland

Coaltown-of Balgonie United Reformed Church, Coaltown-of Balgonie

The Church started in 1894 as Churches of Christ with around 20 members.
The present building was built in 1908.

On 26 September 1981, the former Churches of Christ united with the United Reformed Church of England and Wales and became part of the Synod of Scotland.
At one time there was a large congregation, Sunday school and Bible class. Unfortunately, ageing greatly reduced the congregation and the children found other things to do on a Sunday morning. One of the younger members of the congregation started a Sunday morning club once a month with six children, but this also failed. They then tried messy church without much success.

There were regular services with Coaltown-of-Balgonie URC's sister church in Dundee and visits to Newburgh Dunning and Dunfermline, part of a joint pastorate, for special occasions. Each year, the church took responsibility for the Remembrance Day service at the village War Memorial; with soup provided in the Church Hall afterwards for the congregation.

An annual Christmas Eve Family Carol Service was also held for the village with mince pies and tea afterwards. Both events were well attended and appreciated by the village.

Before its closure, a final church service was held on 25 July 2021, with six members in attendance.

Community Church of St Serf, Dunning

No report given.

Jubilee Ministers, 2021 and 2022

Years of service	Name	Synod	Date of ordination
50	Anthony Ronald Ruffell	Thames North	25 November 1972
50	Brenda Kay Stephenson	Wessex	1 September 1972
50	Charles Stephen Martin	Eastern	22 July 1972
60	Donald L Pines	West Midlands	1 July 1962
60	Donald Wakefield Elliott	Thames North	1 July 1962
60	Dorothy Constance Spence	North Western	1 July 1962
60	Geoffrey Herickx	East Midlands	1 January 1962
50	John Alexander Stewart	Thames North	1 July 1972
60	John Johansen-Berg	Wessex	1 July 1962
60	John Patrick Reardon	East Midlands	1 July 1962
60	John Robinson	North Western	9 December 1962
60	John William McCrum Miller	Scotland	28 March 1962
60	John William Stewart Clark	Scotland	20 November 1962
50	Jonathan George Dean	Thames North	15 January 1972
50	Kathryn M Compston	South Western	23 September 1972
50	Kevin Patrick Swaine	Thames North	2 September 1972
50	Lionel G Jameson	West Midlands	26 November 1972
60	Malcolm Shapland	Wales	26 September 1962
60	Michael Graham Dunford	Eastern	19 September 1962
50	Pamela Ward	North Western	5 August 1972
50	Peter Chave	South Western	15 July 1972
60	Peter Stanley Killick	South Western	14 July 1962
60	Peter Ward Beaman MBE	Mersey	7 July 1962
60	Robert James Ellis	South Western	25 July 1962
50	Susan Kathleen Armitage	Thames North	1 June 1972

Nominations

Assembly committees and other appointments

Notes:

1. The General Assembly Moderator, the Assembly Moderator-elect, the Immediate-past Assembly Moderator and the General Secretary are members ex officio of every standing committee. Deputy General Secretaries are members ex officio of every standing committee within their department. Any ex officio member may arrange for an appropriate deputy, such as any Deputy General Secretary or an officer of Assembly, to attend on their behalf. Any committee may invite other Assembly officers (or their deputies) or staff members to attend in a non-voting capacity where the business so requires.

2. Symbols have been used as follows: ** denotes those whom General Assembly is invited to appoint for the first time; † denotes those who have been invited to extend their periods of service; †† denotes those returning after a break.

3. Numbers in round brackets following names indicate the member's synod: (1) Northern, (2) North Western, (3) Mersey, (4) Yorkshire, (5) East Midlands, (6) West Midlands, (7) Eastern, (8) South Western, (9) Wessex, (10) Thames North, (11) Southern, (12) Wales, (13) Scotland. This numbering is not shown where it is not relevant.

4. When a member of a committee is there as a representative of another body or a particular category this is indicated in round brackets following the name.

5. Committee membership is normally for a period of four years, though this may sometimes exceptionally be renewable. Committee convenors serve an additional preliminary year as convenor-elect. In sections one to five of the report, appointments with a different term are noted.

6. Dates in square brackets following names indicate the date of retirement, assuming a full term.

7. In accordance with the decision of General Assembly 2000, some nominations are made directly by the National Synods of Wales and Scotland.

8. New committee members normally take up their roles at the conclusion of General Assembly.

9. Nominations to Assembly committees and their subcommittees, and to advisory and task groups serving Assembly and Assembly Executive, should be of members of the United Reformed Church, or youth representatives who meet the criteria for membership of Assembly. A term of service may normally be completed if someone ceases to be a member of the URC during their term.

10. Nominations of URC representatives to external bodies should either be URC members, or youth representatives who meet the criteria for membership of Assembly, or URC staff who have relevant expertise. The nomination of a staff member would automatically lapse if the person concerned ceased to hold a URC post.

11. This list will be superseded in November 2022. The latest list approved by General Assembly or by Assembly Executive on its behalf is available at: http://bit.ly/URCNom.

1. Assembly Executive

Assembly Executive acts on behalf of General Assembly. It consists of the officers of Assembly, the immediate past and elect Assembly Moderators, the deputies to the General Secretary and treasurer, the assistant clerk, four representatives from each synod, normally, but not necessarily, including the moderator and the synod clerk, together with the convenors of Assembly committees, the chair of the United Reformed Church Trust and three members for URC Youth, including the URC Youth Moderator. In attendance are staff secretaries, Assembly Moderator's chaplain and others as appropriate.

1.1 Human resources advisory group

Convenor: Mr Geoff Shaw [2023]
Convenor-Elect: Mrs Bridget Fosten [2023]** [to serve as convenor 2023-2027]
General Secretary
Deputy General Secretary (Administration and Resources)
Nominated members:

Mrs Barbara Ellis [2024]
Mr Edward Hoddinott-Leighton [2026]**

1.2 Law and polity advisory group

Convenor: Ms Morag McLintock [2024]
Secretary: Mr Neil Mackenzie [2026]†
General Secretary
Clerk of General Assembly
Assistant Clerk of General Assembly
Synod Clerk representative: Mrs Melanie Campbell [2025]
Property, legal and trust officers' representative: Ms Muna Levan-Harris
Nominated members:

The Revd Steven Manders [2025]
Ms Denise FitzPatrick [2026]†
In attendance: Legal Adviser

1.3 Listed buildings advisory group

Convenor: The Revd Dr James Mather [2025]† (nominated by the group)
Secretary: Mr Geoff Milnes [2025]† (nominated by the group)
General Secretary
Synod Representatives:

Vacancy (1)
Mr Michael Williams (2)
Ms Alison Lee (3)
Mr David Figures (4)
Mrs Judith Booth (5)
Mr Matthew McDade (6)
Mr Peter West (7)
Mr Roger James (8)
Mr Gerry Prosser (9)
Mr Christopher Buckwell (10)
Mr Guy Morfett (11)

1.4 Resource sharing task group

Convenor: The Revd Steve Faber [2024] (Synod Moderator)
Secretary: Mr Chris Atherton
Treasurer: The Revd Dick Gray
Miss Margaret Atkinson
Mr Mike Gould
URC Treasurer

1.5 Net zero task group

Deputy General Secretary (Administration and Resources)
Secretary for Church and Society
Representative members:

Synod Moderator: Vacancy	Finance Committee: Vacancy
URC Trust: Vacancy	URC Youth: Vacancy
Synod Property Officers: Vacancy	
Synod Green Apostles: Vacancy	URC Children: Vacancy

1.6 Church life review group

The Revd Dr John Bradbury	The Revd Lindsey Sanderson
Mrs Melanie Campbell	Ms Victoria Turner
The Revd Steve Faber	The Revd Dr Phil Wall
The Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson	Dr Gordon Woods
Mrs Muna Levan-Harris	

2. General Secretariat

2.1 Faith and order committee

The convenor and nominated members normally serve for six years.
Convenor: The Revd Dr Robert Pope [2026]
Secretary: Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations
General Secretary
Nominated members:

The Revd Samuel Silungwe [2023]	The Revd Sue McCoan [2026]
Ms Diana Paulding [2026]	The Revd Kristin Ofstad [2026]
The Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson [2027]	

2.2 Nominations committee

Synods appoint and decide terms for their representation.
Convenor: Mrs Helen Lidgett [2025]
Secretary: Mrs Margaret Marshall [2026]**
A past Moderator of General Assembly
General Secretary
Synod Representatives:

Mrs Melanie Campbell (1)	The Revd Brian Jolly (2)
Mrs Rita Griffiths (3)	Mr Tim Crossley (4)
The Revd Camilla Veitch (5)	Mrs Rachel Wakeman** (6)
Mr Keir Hounsome (7)	Mrs Gwen Jennings** (8)
Ms Karen Bell (9)	The Revd George Watt** (10)
The Revd Russell Furley-Smith (11)	
Ms Helen Stenson (12)	
Mr John Collings (13)	

In attendance:
Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries
Equalities Committee representative

2.2.1 Panel for General Assembly appointments

Members usually serve for five years as training is required.

Retiring 2023

Mrs Barbara Ellis (3)
Mrs Helen Lidgett (5)
The Revd Ruth Whitehead (8)
The Revd Alison Hall (3)
Ms Helen Stenson (12)
Mrs Sheila Davies (3)

Retiring 2024

The Revd Jan Adamson (13)
Dr Paul Ashitey (10)
Mr Matthew Barkley (9)
The Revd Lucy Brierley (9)
Mr David Gartside (3)
Ms Pippa Hodgson (5)
The Revd Paul Robinson (12)
Mr Alex Walker (4)
The Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson (9)
Ms Victoria Paulding (5)
Mr Reuben Watt (11)
The Revd Sal Bateman (10)
The Revd Peter Henderson (8)
The Revd George Mwaura (5)
Mr Patrick Sheard (1)

Retiring 2026

The Revd Reginald Mudenda (11)
Mrs Darnette Whitby-Reid (10)
The Revd Mark Robinson (9)
Mrs Pat Poinen (1)

Retiring 2027

Mrs Sue Brown** (9)
Mrs Wendy Dunnett** (9)
Mr Trevor Orr** (4)
Ms Lorraine Downer** (10)
The Revd Elaine Hutchinson** (6)

2.3 Ministerial incapacity and discipline (Mind) advisory group

Convenor: The Revd Steven Manders [2026]**
Secretary: The Revd Chris Copley [2026]
Synod Moderator: The Revd Clare Downing [2023]
Convenor of the Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel
Senior Member of the Disciplinary Investigation Panel
Secretary to the Assembly Commission for Discipline: Mr Philip Laws [2026]
Convenor of the review commission of the incapacity procedure
Secretary of the review commission of the incapacity procedure
Consultant for ministers and CRCWs: Mrs Fiona Smith [2026]**
Consultant for investigation teams: The Revd Ian Kirby [2023]
Training coordinator: The Revd Andy Braunston [2024]
General Secretary; Clerk of General Assembly; Secretary for Ministries; legal adviser

2.4 Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel

Convenor: The Revd Nigel Adkinson [2029]
Deputy Convenor: Dr David Jones [2029]
Members (not time-limited):

The Revd Nigel Adkinson
The Revd Andy Braunston
Mrs Barbara Ellis
Mr Alastair Forsyth**
The Revd Dominic Grant**
Dr David Jones
The Revd Sue McCoan
The Revd Martha McInnes**
The Revd Sarah Moore
The Revd Bill Bowman
Mr Ian Corless
The Revd Peter Flint**
Mrs Cathy Glazier
The Revd Marcus Hargis
Mrs Mary Kelly
The Revd Alan McGougan
Ms Morag McLintock
The Revd Wilbert Sayimani

Mr Stephen Thornton
Mrs Janet Virr
The Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe**
Mr Gordon Wanles

2.5 Disciplinary Investigation Panel

Senior Member: The Revd Dr Janet Tollington [2029]
Deputy Senior Member: The Revd Martin Spain [2029]
Members (not time-limited):

The Revd Martin Ferris
The Revd Lesley Moseley
The Revd George Mwuara
Mr Mark Rigby
Ms Cathy Simpson
The Revd Dr Janet Tollington
The Revd Derek Hopkins
The Revd Craig Muir
Mr Giles Robinson**
Mr Andy Russell
The Revd Martin Spain
The Revd Geoff Wright

2.6 Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline

Minister members:

The Revd Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson [2027]**
The Revd Nick Mark [2027]**
The Revd Raymond Singh [2027]**

Elder members:

Mr Tim Crossley [2027]**
Vacancy
Mr Dodie Khurshid [2027]**

2.7 Standing panel for the incapacity procedure

This panel is normally convened by the member with legal experience.
Members serve one or two five-year terms.
Secretary: Mr George Faris [2027]**
Synod Moderator: The Revd Simon Walkling [2023]
Past Moderator of General Assembly: The Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe [2027]†
Commission officer for the incapacity procedure: The Revd Roy Lowes [2023]
Mr David Nash (legal experience) [2023]
Dr Ewen Harley (GP) [2023]

2.8 Pastoral reference and welfare committee

Convenor: The Revd David Grosch-Miller [2023]
Convenor-Elect: The Revd Dr Elizabeth Welch [2023]** [to serve as convenor 2023-2027]
Secretary: Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship)
General Secretary Deputy Treasurer
Synod Moderator: The Revd Brian Jolly [2024]
Nominated Members:

The Revd Bridget Powell [2023]
Mrs Hilary Miles [2026]**
The Revd Dr Irene John [2024]

3. Mission department

3.1 Mission committee

Convenor: Sarah Lane Cawte [2024]
Secretary: Deputy General Secretary (Mission)
The Revd Grant Wilson (1) [interim]**
The Revd Stuart Nixon (3) [2026]
The Revd Robert Bushby (5) [2023]
Ms Lindsey Brown (7) [2026]†
Mr Aftab Mughal (2) [2025]
Vacancy (4)
Vacancy (6)
The Revd Henriette Wentink (8) [2026]†

The Revd Ray Stanyon (9) [2025]
Vacancy (10)
The Revd Martin Knight (11) [2026]**
The Revd Branwen Rees (12) [2026]†
Mr John Collings (13) [2023]

3.1.1 International exchange reference group
Convenor: The Revd Dr Ana Gobledale [2024]
Synod Moderator: The Revd Paul Whittle [2023]†
Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries
Nominated member:
Vacancy

3.1.2 Commitment for Life (CfL) reference group
Convenor: Mr Richard Lewney [2024]
At least two CfL advocates
Representative of mission team
Representative of mission committee
Representative from Christian Aid
Representative of Global Justice Now
Programme Officer for Global Justice and Partnerships

3.1.3 Interfaith enabling group
The convenor is nominated by the Mission Committee.
Convenor: The Revd Tracey Lewis [2023]
Secretary: The Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations
Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer for the National Synod of Scotland
Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer for the National Synod of Wales
Nominated members:
Ms Victoria Turner [2025]
Mr Andy Lie [2023]
Co-opted members:
The Revd Dr Graham Adams [2024]
The Revd Dr Mark Godin [2024]
The Revd Dr John Parry

3.1.4 Joint Public Issues Team strategy and policy group
Deputy General Secretary (Mission)
The Revd Steve Faber

3.1.5 Rural strategy group (United Reformed Church/Methodist)
Future being reviewed by the Mission Committee.

3.1.6 Pioneer and Fresh Expressions enabling group
Representatives:
Mission Committee
Ministries Committee
Education and Learning Committee
Children and Youth Work Committee
URC Pioneer network

3.1.7 Legacies of Slavery task group
Convenor: Professor David Reynolds
Secretary: Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries
Programme Officer (Global Justice and Partnerships)
The Revd Stephen Ansa-Addo
The Revd John Campbell
The Revd Zaidie Orr
Ms Victoria Turner

4. Discipleship department

4.1 Ministries committee

Convenor: The Revd Mary Thomas [2026]**
Secretary: Secretary for Ministries
Leadership in worship advocate: Vacancy
Synod Moderator: The Revd Jamie Kissack [2024]
Convenors of the Accreditations (CRCW and SCM), Maintenance of Ministry and Retired Ministers' Housing subcommittees
Convenor of the Assessment Board
Nominated members:

- The Revd Stuart Scott [2023]
- Mrs Gill Bates [2024]
- The Revd Lesley Moseley [2025]
- The Revd Sally Willett [2023]
- Chris Kellett [2025]

4.1.1 Accreditations (CRCW and SCM) subcommittee

Convenor: The Revd Dr Paul Dean [2025]
Joint Secretaries:

- Secretary for Ministries [2023]†
- Development Worker (CRCW & SCM) [2023]†

Convenor of the Assessment Board
Representatives:

- Synod moderators: The Revd David Herbert [2024]
- SCMs: The Revd Tim Clarke [2024]
- CRCWs: Ms Jo Patterson [2026]**

Nominated Members:

- The Revd Alison Micklem [2025]
- Two vacancies

4.1.2 Maintenance of ministry subcommittee

Convenor: The Revd David Coote [2023]†
Convenor from General Assembly 2023: Convenor of Ministries Committee
Secretary for Ministries
Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship)
Treasurer
Convenor of Pensions Committee
In attendance: Payroll Manager

4.1.3 Retired ministers' housing subcommittee – under review

Terms of service shall be for four years with the possibility of a further term of four years.
The convenor shall be a member of the Ministries Committee nominated by that Committee.
Convenor: The Revd Paul Whittle [2023]**
Secretary: Secretary for Ministries
Nominated Members:

- Two vacancies

Representative Members:

- Tenants: The Revd Dr Martin Camroux [2026]**
- Retired Ministers' Housing Society: The Revd Simon Walkling [2026]**

Co-opted Member: The Revd David Coote

4.1.4 Assessment board

Members usually serve for five years as training is required.
Convenor: Professor Bill Gould [2024]

Retiring 2023
The Revd John Danso (10)
Mr Dan Morrell (4)

Retiring 2024
The Revd Jan Adamson (13)
The Revd Gerald England (8)
Mr Mark Tubby (7)

Retiring 2025
Ms Mercy Nimako (11)
Ms Liz Sharples (5)
The Revd Samuel Silungwe (5)

4.2 Education and Learning Committee
Convenor: Mr Alan Yates [2023]
Convenor-Elect: Ms Pippa Hodgson [2023]** [to serve as convenor 2023-2027]
Secretary: Secretary for Education and Learning
Nominated Members: (nominated by the Nominations Committee)
Mrs Margaret Marshall [2024]
The Revd Tim Meachin [2024]
The Revd Andrew Mudharara [2026]**
Ex-officio members:
a General Assembly moderator (current, past or elect)
General Secretary
Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship)
Representative Members: (nominated by the appropriate group)
RCL Principals: The Revd Dr John McNeil Scott [2026]**
Synod Training and Development Officers: The Revd Dr Rob Hoch [2026]**
CYDOs and other Children and Youth Work officers: Mr Richard Knott [2026]**
EM1 students
Non-voting members: (nominated by the appropriate group)
Synod Moderator: The Revd David Herbert [2023]†
Methodist Church representative: Mr Richard Armiger**
RCL Principals: The Revd Dr Robert Pope (Acting)
The Revd Dr Rosalind Selby
Secretary for Ministries

4.2.1 Education and learning finance subcommittee
Chair: Mr Alan Yates
Minutes Secretary: Secretary for Education and Learning
Co-opted Member: The Revd Edward Sanniez
Ex-officio: URC Treasurer, Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship), Convenor of the Education and Learning Committee
Staff in attendance: Chief Finance Officer
The chair and member are appointed by the Education and Learning Committee.

4.2.2 Stepwise development group
Convenor: The Revd Alison Davis
Administrator: Stepwise Programme Assistant
Secretary for Education and Learning Stepwise Programme Manager

Education and Learning Instructional Designer Project Manager for Walking the Way
Education and Learning Programme Officer (by invitation)

Convenor of the Stepwise Learning Standards Board
Representatives – serving appropriate terms of service:
Children's and Youth Work Committee: Mr Leo Roberts
Synod mission enablers network: The Revd Stuart Radcliffe
Synod training and development officers:Vacancy
Resource Centres for Learning: a tutor
Together Ethnic and Minority URC: The Revd Zaidie Orr
Co-opted Members:
The Revd Simon Goddard (Fresh Expressions)
The Revd Peter Henderson
Mr Iain Johnston (Faith in Community Scotland)
The convenor and the co-opted members are appointed by the Education and Learning Committee.

4.3 Children's and Youth Work Committee

Convenor: The Revd Paul Robinson [2024]
Secretary: Head of Children's and Youth Work
URC Youth Moderator URC Youth Moderator-elect
Convenor of the pilots subcommittee Pilots representative
Nominated members:
Mr Matthew Barkley [2023]
The Revd Janine Atkinson [2024]
The Revd Julian Sanders [2025]
Mr Reuben Watt [2023]
The Revd Samantha Sheehan [2024]
Ms Caroline Akinyele [2025]

4.4 Worship Reference Group

Convenor: The Revd Sam Silungwe [2024]
Secretary: The Minister for Digital Worship
Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship)
Nominated Members:
The Revd Dr Ana Gobledale [2024]
Mr David Williams [2026]**
The Revd Anne Sardeson [2026]**

4.5 Safeguarding Committee

Convenor: The Revd Roger Jones [2026]**
Secretary: Designated Safeguarding Lead
Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship)
Secretary for Ministries
Training and Development Coordinator
Nominated Members:
Mr Alex Walker [2026]**
Mrs Kate Yates [2026]**
Synod Safeguarding Practice Group representative:
Ms Julie Rafferty [2026]**
Synod Moderator: The Revd Ruth Whitehead [2026]**
National Synod of Scotland representative: Ms Ruth Goold [2026]**
URC Advocated Survivors Group representatives (up to two): group not yet operative
Independent members:
Mr Tim Carter (Methodist Church) [2026]**
Ms Fi Cisneros [2026]**
In attendance:
Head of Children's and Youth Work
Secretary for Education and Learning

5. Administration and resources department

5.1 Business Committee

Convenor: The Revd Mark Robinson [2025]
Secretary: General Secretary
Moderator of General Assembly
Moderator-elect and Immediate-past Moderator of General Assembly
Clerk of General Assembly
Assistant Clerk of General Assembly
URC Treasurer
Nominated members:

Mrs Darnette Whitby-Reid [2025]
Mr Reuben Watt [2026]**

5.2 Communications

Convenor: The Revd Dr Peter Stevenson [2023]
Convenor-Elect: The Revd Lucy Brierley [2023]** [to serve as convenor 2023-2027]
Secretary: Head of Communications
The Revd Tim Lowe [2023]
Mr Dan Morell [2023]
The Revd Heather Whyte [2023]
Three vacancies

5.3 Equalities Committee

Convenor: The Revd Naison Hove [2026]
Secretary: The Revd David Salsbury [2023]
URC Youth Equalities and Diversity Representative
Nominated members:

The Revd Jayne Taylor [2023]
The Revd Jo Clare-Young [2024]
Mrs Rosie Martin [2024]
Ms Judy Rogers [2024]
Dr Ruth Shepherd [2024]
Two vacancies

5.3.1 Affirmative Action task group

Convenor: Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries
Secretary: Equalities Committee Secretary
Representative Members:
Mission Committee: Ms Lindsey Brown
URC Youth: Ms Philippa Osei
Members:

Ms Muskaan Jonathan
The Revd John Macaulay
The Revd Andrew Mudharara
The Revd George Mwaura
Mrs Pat Poinen

5.4 Finance Committee

Convenor: URC Treasurer
Deputy Treasurer: Mr Vaughan Griffiths [2025]
Chief Finance Officer Chair of the URC Trust
Nominated members:

Mrs Jane Humphreys [2023]
Ms Joana Marfoh [2023]
The Revd Wilbert Sayimani [2023]
Ms Denise Harman [2024]
The Revd Simon Copley [2025]
Mr Gordon Wanless [2025]
Mr Bill Potter [2026]††

5.4.1 Pensions Committee
Convenor: Vacancy
Secretary: Pensions Manager
Nominated Members:
Ms Joana Marfoh [2024] The Revd John Piper [2023]
Co-opted members, maximum of three:
Mr David Martin
Treasurer or Deputy Treasurer Convenor of the Investment Committee
Convenor of the Maintenance of Ministry subcommittee
Deputy General Secretary (Administration and Resources)
In attendance:
Chief Finance Officer
Secretary for Ministries (for Ministers' Pension Fund matters)

5.5 United Reformed Church Trust
Members normally serve for four years and may only serve a maximum of two terms (eight years). The directors of the Trust appoint new directors from those appointed as members. The members of the Trust elect the chair from among their own number and appoint a secretary and deputy secretary.
Chair: Mrs Val Morrison (to September 2022)
Secretary: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones
Deputy Secretary: Mr John Samson
Members:
Group one (synods 1, 2, 3, 4, 13):
The Revd Nick Mark (13) [2024]
Group two (synods 5, 6, 7, 8, 12):
Mr Clifford Patten (7) [2024] Mr David Greatorex (5) [2024]
The Revd James Breslin (5) [2024] Mr David Lathbury (6) [2026]†
Dr Stephen Thornton (7) [2026]** Ms Catriona Wheeler (5) [2026]†
Group three (synods 9,10,11):
The Revd Julian Macro (9) [2025] The Revd John Macaulay (10) [2026]**
URC Youth appointee: vacancy
Moderator of General Assembly Clerk of General Assembly
General Secretary Treasurer
In attendance:
Convenor of the Investment Committee Minute secretary
Chief Finance Officer

5.5.1 Church House management group
Convenor: Deputy General Secretary (Administration and Resources)
General Secretary Chief Finance Officer
Nominated members:
Dr Ian Harrison [2024] Mr Adam Lester [2024]
Two vacancies

5.5.2 Remuneration committee
Convenor: Mr William McVey
Secretary: Deputy General Secretary (Administration and Resources)
Ms Sushila Jetha (Methodist HR) URC Treasurer
In attendance: Chief Finance Officer

5.6 The United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Trust Ltd
Terms run until the AGM in September. The directors of the Trust appoint new directors from those appointed as members. The board members elect the chair from among their own number and appoint the company secretary.
Chair: Mrs Bridget Micklem
Deputy chair: Mr Lyndon Thomas
Secretary: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones
Church Nominated Trustees/Directors:

Mrs Bridget Micklem [2023]	Mr Colin MacBean [2024]
Mrs Faith Paulding [2025]	Mr Chris Atherton [2026]**
Convenor of the Pensions Committee	
URC Deputy Treasurer	
Convenor of the Maintenance of Ministry subcommittee	
Convenor of the Investment Committee	

Member Nominated Trustees/Directors:

The Revd Dr Janet Tollington [2023]	The Revd Paul Bedford [2022]
The Revd Caroline Vodden [2022]	The Revd Daniel Cheyne [2022

5.7 Investment Committee
Convenor: Mr Richard Nunn [2026]
Secretary: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones
Members:

Mrs Jean Hudson [2023]	Dame Katharine Barker [2023]
Mr Lyndon Thomas [2024]	Vacancy
URC Treasurer	Convenor, Pensions Committee

Chair of United Reformed Church Trust or another director
Chair of United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Trust or another director
Treasurer, Westminster College
In attendance: Chief Finance Officer

6. Representatives to meetings of sister Churches

6.1	General Synod of the Church of England	Mission Committee Nomination
6.2	Methodist Conference	Mission Committee Nomination
6.3	Congregational Federation	Mission Committee Nomination
6.4	Church of Scotland	Assembly Moderator and Synod Rep
6.5	United Free Church of Scotland	Synod nomination
6.6	Scottish Assembly of the Congregational Federation	Synod nomination
6.7	Scottish Episcopal Church	Synod nomination
6.8	Methodist Church in Scotland	Synod nomination
6.9	Baptist Union of Scotland	Synod nomination
6.10	Presbyterian Church of Wales	Assembly Moderator
6.11	Union of Welsh Independents	Synod nomination
6.12	Covenanted Baptists	Synod nomination
6.13	Church in Wales Governing Board	Synod nomination
6.14	Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church	Mission Committee Nomination

7. Representatives on ecumenical Church bodies

The following have been nominated as United Reformed Church representatives at the major gatherings of the ecumenical bodies listed.

7.1 World Council of Churches 2022 Assembly
Delegate: The Revd Sarah Moore

7.2 Council for World Mission Assembly
Representatives will be appointed in 2023 for the 2024 CWM Assembly

7.3 World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) General Council
Representatives are appointed for each meeting of the Council

7.4 Conference of European Churches Assembly
Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations and one other

7.5 The Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council
The Revd Rowena Francis The Revd Professor David Thompson
Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries

7.6 Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)

7.6.1 CTBI Church leaders' meeting
General Secretary

7.6.2 CTBI senior representatives' forum
General Secretary
Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

7.6.3 CTBI environmental issues network
The Revd Mike Shrubsole

7.6.4 CTBI consultative group on ministry amongst children (CGMC)
Head of Children's and Youth Work and one other

7.6.5 CTBI interreligious network
Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

7.6.6 CTBI China forum
The Revd John Scott

7.6.7 CTBI Korea group
The Revd David Grosch-Miller

7.6.8 CTBI Middle East contact group
Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

7.6.9 CTBI Churches' refugee network
The Revd Fleur Houston

7.7 Churches Together in England (CTE)

7.7.1 CTE enabling group
Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

7.7.2 CTE group for evangelisation
Deputy General Secretary (Mission)

7.8 Action of Churches Together in Scotland (Acts) members meeting
Appointed by the National Synod of Scotland

7.9 National Sponsoring Body for Scotland
Appointed by the National Synod of Scotland

7.10 Churches Together in Wales (CYTUN)
Appointed by the National Synod of Wales

7.11 Commission of Covenanted Churches in Wales
Appointed by the National Synod of Wales

7.12 Free Church education committee
Professor Graham Handscomb Mrs Gillian Kingston

7.13 European Churches' environmental network
The Revd David Coleman

8. Representatives on formal bilateral and multilateral committees

8.1 Methodist/United Reformed Church liaison group
Co-convenor: The Revd Geoffrey Clarke (Synod Moderator) (5-year term) [2026]
Co-secretary: Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations
Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer for the National Synod of Scotland
Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer for the National Synod of Wales
Nominated Members – serving one or two four-year terms:
The Revd Tim Richards [2024] Mr Tim Hopley [2025]

8.1.1 Methodist/ United Reformed Church strategic oversight group
General Secretary
A General Assembly Moderator
Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

8.2 Church of England - United Reformed Church Contact Group
Co-Chair: The Revd Ruth Whitehead [2024]
Co-Secretary: Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations
The Revd Dr Susan Durber [2024] Mr John Ellis [2024]
The Revd Tim Meadows [2024]

8.3 EMU Partnership (Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church in Scotland and the United Reformed Church National Synod of Scotland) [see note 7]
Appointed by the National Synod of Scotland

8.4 Conversations between the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe and the Anglican Communion

The Revd Julian Templeton

8.5 Roman Catholic/United Reformed Church Dialogue Group

Co-chair: The Revd Dr John Bradbury
Co-secretary: The Revd Philip Brooks
Members:

Mr John Cornell
The Revd Jason McCullagh
The Revd Dr Sarah Hall
The Revd Lindsey Sanderson

9. Representatives on governing bodies of theological colleges, etc

9.1 Northern College

The Revd Raymond Singh [2023]
Mr Willie Duncan [2025]
The Revd Mark Bates [2026]†
Mrs Margaret Marshall [2024]
The Revd John Grundy [2025]
Dr Lesley Coote [2026]**
In attendance: Secretary for Education and Learning

9.2 Westminster College: board of governors

Governors serve six-year terms, which may be renewed.
Convenor: The Revd Nigel Uden [2026]
Clerk to the governors: The Revd Naomi Young-Rodas [2028]**
Honorary treasurer (Westminster College): Mr Andrew Grimwade [2023]†
Acting Principal: The Revd Dr Robert Pope
Mr John Ellis [2023]
The Revd Stuart Scott [2023]
Mrs Darnette Whitby-Reid [2025]
The Revd David Miller [2028]**
One vacancy
Note 1: A further six governors are appointed by the Cambridge Theological Federation, the University of Cambridge, Anglia Ruskin University, the college's teaching staff, its students and the Cheshunt Foundation.
Note 2: The Secretary for Education and Learning and the URC Treasurer are normally in attendance.

9.2.1 The Cheshunt Foundation

Mr Guy Morfett

9.2.2 Cambridge Theological Federation

Convenor, Westminster College governors

10. Governors of colleges and schools with which the United Reformed Church is associated

10.1 Caterham School

Southern Synod Moderator

10.2 Eltham College

Mr Martin Fosten

10.3 Walthamstow Hall
Mrs Isabel Heald

10.4 Milton Mount Foundation
Mrs Daphne Bembridge [2023]
Mr Ray Dunnett [2024]
The Revd Kevin Swaine [2024]
The Revd Derek Lindfield [2026]†
Vacancy
Five URC governors serve four-year terms, which may be renewed.

10.5 Silcoates School
The Revd Jason McCullagh [2024]
Vacancy
Governors serve three-year terms.

10.6 Taunton School
Baptist governor at present

10.7 Bishops Stortford College
Mr Richard Harrison

11. Miscellaneous

The United Reformed Church is represented on a variety of other national organisations and committees as follows:

11.1 Arthur Rank Centre
The Revd Elizabeth Caswell

11.2 Churches Legislation Advisory Service
Ms Muna Levan Harris [2023]
General Secretary

11.3 Congregational Fund Board
Mr Anthony Bayley [2023]
The Revd Geoffrey Roper [2023]
The Revd Janine Atkinson [2023]
Mrs Mary Steele [2023]
Mr Mike Hart [2024]

11.4 Congregational Memorial Hall Trust
Mr John Ellis [2023]
Mr Simon Fairnington [2023]
Mrs Margaret Thompson [2024]
Mr Philip Bonnier [2025]
The Revd Derek Wales [2025]
The Revd Julian Macro [2026]**
Representatives serve four-year terms which may be renewed.

11.5 Historic England Places of Worship Forum
Convenor of the listed buildings advisory group

11.6 Lord Wharton's Charity
The Revd Derek Lindfield

11.7 Retired ministers' and widows' fund
The Revd Julian Macro
Mr Anthony Bayley
Ms Liz Sharples

11.8 Roots for Churches Ltd
The Revd Jenny Mills**
Nominated by the Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship)

11.9 Samuel Robinson's Charities
Mr Tony Alderman

11.10 Scout Association – URC General Assembly Chaplai
The Revd Keith Morrison
This appointment is made by the Children's and Youth Work Committee

11.11 United Reformed Church History Society
The Revd Dr Michael Jagessar [2024] Mrs Jean Wyber [2027]†
The Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe [2023]
Council Members serve five-year terms which may be renewed

11.12 World Day of Prayer
England, Wales and Northern Ireland: Vacancy
Scotland: Synod appointment.

11.13 Westhill Endowment Trust
Two vacancies

Updated on 22 July 2022 by the secretary of the nominations committee (**nominations.secretary@urc.org.uk**) to incorporate these changes:

- Those approved by General Assembly in July 2022
- **1.5 Net Zero task group** – replaces the Environmental Task Group, see: General Assembly July 22 ,Paper I2.
- **2.7 Standing panel for the incapacity procedure** – the Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe and Mr George Faris to serve for five years, rather than four, to the end of General Assembly 2027
- **2.7 Standing panel for the incapacity procedure –** the Revd Ian Kirby is now the Consultant for Investigation Teams
- **3.1.1 International exchange reference group** – the Revd Ros Lyle has resigned
- **3.1.6 Pioneer and Fresh Expressions enabling group** – has been added, see: Assembly Executive November 21, Paper I3
- **3.1.7 Legacies of Slavery task group** – has been added, see: General Assembly July 22, Paper I6
- **4.2 Education and Learning Committee** – Mr Richard Armiger represents the Methodist Church
- **4.1.1 Accreditations (CRCW and SCM) subcommittee**
  The CRCW representative is now Ms Jo Patterson. The subcommittee continues with joint secretaries for a further year
- **4.1.3 Retired Ministers' Housing Society subcommittee**
  Representative members: Tenants: the Revd Dr Martin Camroux, Retired Ministers' Housing Society: the Revd Simon Walkling; co-opted member: the Revd David Coote.
- **4.4 Walking the Way steering group** has been deleted on completion of its work
- **5.3.1 Affirmative Action task group** – has been added, see: General Assembly July 22, Paper E1

- **6.1 General Synod of the Church of England representative** is now a Mission Committee nomination.
- **6.2 Methodist Conference representative** is now a Mission Committee nomination.

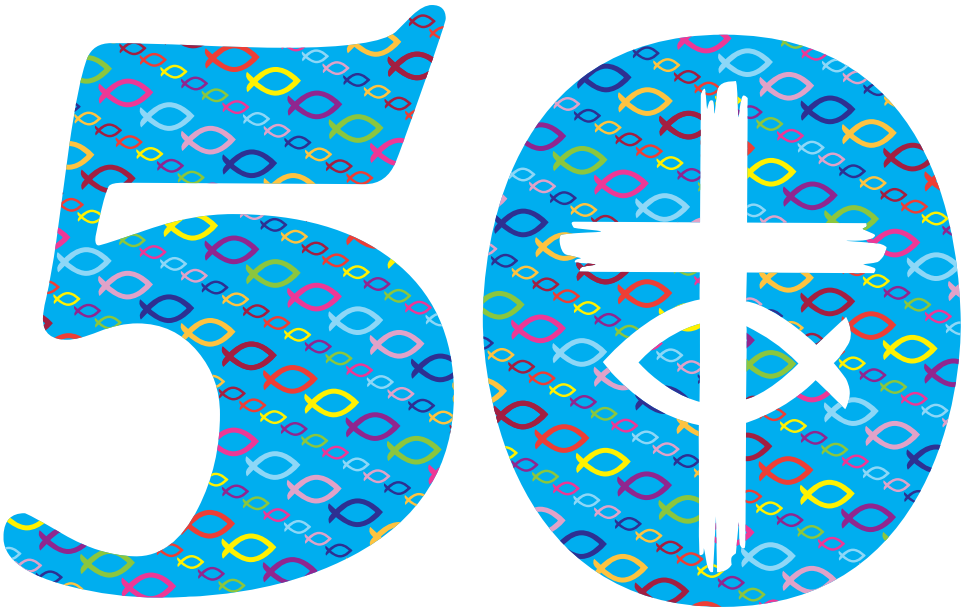
Note: this list will be superseded in November 2022. The latest list approved by General Assembly or by Assembly Executive on its behalf is available at: http://bit.ly/URCNom.

Resolutions index

Resolution number	Description	Report page/s	Record page/s
1	Children's and Youth Work Committee	34	14
2	Children's and Youth Work Committee	34	19
3	Children's and Youth Work Committee	34	14
4	Children's and Youth Work Committee	34	15
5	Assembly Accredited Lay Pioneers and the Newbigin Pioneering Hub	42	12
6	Assembly Accredited Lay Pioneers and the Newbigin Pioneering Hub	42	10
7	Affirmative action towards an anti-racist church	49	12
8	Possilble one-off payments to ministers and lay staff	79	30
9	Does the URC need a Retired Ministers' Benevolent Fund?	82	23
10	URC Trust Accounts 2021	85	
11	URC future pensions arrangements	86	15
12	URC future pensions arrangements	86	16
13	URC future pensions arrangements	86	16
14	The maintenance of the Ministry sub-committee	114	24
15	URC Confidentiality Policy	119	24
16	Reinvigorating the ecumenical vision of the United Reformed Church	123	31
17	Environmental Policy	131	21
18	Korea Peace Appeal	142	23
19	Vision2020 report	144	24
20	Legacies of (transatlantic) slavery	169	14
21	Legacies of (transatlantic) slavery	169	32
22	Nominations Committee: Report to General Assembly 2022	175	24
23	Nominations Committee: Report to General Assembly 2022	175	24
24	Ratification of constitutional changes concerning the Ministerial Discipline and Incapacity Procedure	197	24
25	Additions to URC Structure and Rules of Procedure regarding Safeguarding	201	26
26	Assembly Committee structures & Church House structures	204	27
27	Assembly Committee structures & Church House structures	213	22
28	Professional investigation within the Discipline Process	213	33
29	Indemnity	232	27
30	Authority within the Discipline Process	232	28

Resolutions index

Resolution	Description	Report page/s	Record page/s
31	Curtailment of a pastoral tie or appointment	234	28
32	Curtailment of a pastoral tie or appointment	235	28
33	Curtailment of a pastoral tie or appointment	237	16
34	Curtailment of a pastoral tie or appointment	237	16
35	Curtailment of a pastoral tie or appointment	237	17
36	Curtailment of a pastoral tie or appointment	238	17
37	Curtailment of a pastoral tie or appointment	239	
38	Assisting an accused minister	239	
39	Assisting an accused minister	239	
40	Appendix Y	241	28
41	The Assembly Representative for Discipline	241	29
42	The Assembly Representative for Discipline	243	19
43	Transitional arrangements from the ‘old’ to the ‘new’ disciplinary process	254	31
44			31
45			31
46			13
47			13
48			13
49			13
50			13
51			14
52			15
53			22, 32
55			34



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