

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



ANNUAL REPORTS



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ORDER OF BUSINESS

- Notes:**
- (i) Business commences at different times each day. There are new business sessions on the Tuesday and Thursday evenings.**
 - (ii) An “Introduction to Assembly Business” will be given in the Assembly Hall on Tuesday at 10am.**
 - (iii) Communion will be held on Tuesday at 11.45am and Worship on Wednesday and Thursday at 12.15pm and 2.45pm respectively.**
 - (iv) Figures in brackets refer to page numbers in the Annual Reports.**

Tuesday

GA Business Committee –
Initial Report

Presbyteries

Trustees

General Council (Section 1)

Public Affairs

People Matter to God

Linkage Commission

Wednesday

Congregational Life and Witness

Training in Ministry

Listening to the Global Church

General Council (Section 2)

Memorials Transmitted

General Council (Section 3)

Thursday

Equipping the Church

Global Mission

Mission in Ireland

General Council (Section 4)

Overtures

Friday

Judicial Commission

Special Judicial Commission

Commission on Applications

General Council (Section 5)

Social Witness

GA Business Committee –
Final Report

NOTES

MONDAY, JUNE 4

Assembly Buildings

7.00 p.m. –

Service of Worship
Constitution of Assembly
Election of Moderator

TUESDAY, JUNE 5

10.30 a.m. –

1. GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE:
Initial Report and Resolutions 1-6 (pages 5-15 and 143).

2. Reports of Presbyteries (pages 161-170).

3. Reception of Corresponding Members and Delegates.

Church of Scotland: Rt Rev Susan Brown; Rev Dr John McPake;
Rev Dr George Whyte

United Reformed Church: Rev Kevin Watson

Church of Ireland: Rt Rev John McDowell; Mrs Margaret Fullerton

The Methodist Church in Ireland: Rev Aian Ferguson,
Mrs Lynda Neilands

Religious Society for Friends: Sheena Bell

Irish Council of Churches: Rev Brian Anderson

Presbyterian Church of Wales: Rev Brian H Jones

CCAP, Synod of Livingstonia: Rev John Gondwe

CCAP, Synod of Zambia: Rev Sevatt Kabaghe

Presbyterian Church of East Africa: Rev Alfred Mugendi Kanga

Presbyterian Church of South Sudan: Rev Peter Gai Lual Marrow

Presbyterian Church of Pakistan: Rev Maqsood Kamil

Church of North India, Gujarat Diocese: Rev Manojkumar Victorbhai
Gohil

National Evangelical Synod of Syria & Lebanon: Rev Joseph Kasaab

Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary: Dr Imad Shehadeh

(Please note: some of the above are waiting on the granting of a Visa. Any changes or additions to the above will be reported in the Supplementary Reports.)

(11.30) Short Intermission.

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

NOTES

11.45 a.m. Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

including the Memorial Roll.

1.00 p.m. LUNCH.

2.00 p.m. –

4. TRUSTEES: Report and Resolutions (pages 171-176).

(2.30) 5. GENERAL COUNCIL: Section 1 of Report and Resolutions 7-15 (pages 1-4, 15-67 and 143-144). Support Services Committee; United Appeal Committee; Guysmere Redevelopment Task Group; Priorities Committee; Memorial Record.

(3.30) Tea/Coffee Break.

4.00 6. COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS: Report and Resolutions (pages 177-195).

Lapsed Business (if any).

5.30 p.m. DINNER.

7.00 p.m. –

7. CSW ALTERNATIVE PRESENTATION
– **People Matter to God**

8.00 8. LINKAGE COMMISSION: Report and Resolutions (pages 196-227).

(9.00) Close of Business

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6

9.30 a.m. –

9. COUNCIL FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS: Report and Resolution (pages 228-254).

(10.45) Tea/Coffee Break.

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

NOTES

- 11.15 10. COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY: Report and Resolutions (pages 255-279).

12.15 p.m. – Worship.

1.00 p.m. LUNCH.

2.00 p.m. –

11. LISTENING TO THE GLOBAL CHURCH
– *Streams in the desert*

(3.00) Tea/Coffee Break.

- 3.30 12. GENERAL COUNCIL: Section 2 of Report and Resolutions 16-19 (pages 68-78 and 144).
Moderator's Advisory Committee; Dialogue and Resources Task Group; Human Identity Task Group.

13. MEMORIALS TRANSMITTED (pages 158-160).

- 4.30 14. GENERAL COUNCIL: Section 3 of Report and Resolutions 20-28 (pages 79-101 and 144-145).
Doctrine Committee; Relationships with Other Denominations Task Group; Church Relations Committee.

Lapsed Business (if any).

(6.00) Close of Business

6.00 p.m. – The Youth Assembly team will host an Assembly Fringe event in the new ground floor conference area. The theme will be 'Together: Connecting the Generations' and will include the launch of a brand new video aimed at inspiring inter-generational mindsets within congregations, as well as sharing stories and ideas. A light tea will be served on arrival.

7.45 p.m. – Evening Celebration: Building Relationships

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

NOTES

THURSDAY, JUNE 7

1.45 p.m. –

15. CTM ALTERNATIVE PRESENTATION
– **Equipping the Church for Effective Ministry
in the 21st Century**

2.45 p.m. – Worship.

(3.30) Tea/Coffee Break.

- 4.00 16. COUNCIL FOR GLOBAL MISSION: Report and Resolutions (pages 280-313).

Lapsed Business (if any).

5.30 p.m. DINNER.

7.00 p.m. –

17. COUNCIL FOR MISSION IN IRELAND: Report and Resolutions (pages 314-354).

- 8.00 18. GENERAL COUNCIL: Section 4 of Report and Resolutions 29-32 (pages 102-113 and 146).
General Data Protection Regulation Task Group; Engagement and Consultations Task Group; Central Prayer Coordination Task Group; Use of Congregational Property by Outside Bodies Task Group; Charity Registration Task Group; Holding Trustees Task Group.

19. OVERTURES: On the Books (pages 375-379)

20. OVERTURES: Ad-Hoc (pages 149-157).

Lapsed Business (if any).

(9.00) Close of Business.

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

NOTES

FRIDAY, JUNE 8

In Private

9.30 a.m. –

21. JUDICIAL COMMISSION: Report and Resolution (pages 355-356).
22. SPECIAL JUDICIAL COMMISSION: Report and Resolution (page 357).
23. COMMISSION ON APPLICATIONS: Report and Resolution (page 358).

In Public

- (10.00) 24. GENERAL COUNCIL: Section 5 of Report and Resolutions 33-38 (pages 114-142 and 146-148).
Nominations Committee; 2017 Special Assembly Task Group; Review of Moderator's Year Task Group; Reformation Celebration Task Group; Historical Archiving Task Group; Ad-Hoc Business.
- (11.00) Tea/Coffee Break.
- 11.30 25. COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL WITNESS: Report and Resolutions (pages 359-374).

Lapsed Business (if any).

- (1.00) 26. GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE:
Final Report and Resolutions (to be tabled).

CLOSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

A Guide to Assembly Procedure

1. **Members of Assembly** consist of all ministers in active duty or retired and some elders, ex officio, together with a representative elder from each established Congregation plus other elders commissioned by Presbyteries to correspond with the number of ministers serving in special appointments. The Assembly quorum is fifty members.
 - (a) Deaconesses, Licentiates, Presbytery representatives of Presbyterian Women and youth, representatives of SPUD and some others are invited to “sit and deliberate” as associates – i.e., to take part with members freely in debate but without voting. In addition to a representative elder, Kirk Sessions have been given permission to name a further person aged up to 30 years of age who may sit and deliberate. This person may be an elder or simply a communicant member.
 - (b) While members should bear in mind any opinions or concerns of their Congregations, Kirk Sessions or Presbyteries, neither ministers nor elders attend as “delegates”, obliged to vote as instructed by any of these. The Assembly should be a gathering of fully responsible, free Christian men and women, always open to spiritual guidance and information on a Church-wide basis, not a device for counting up decisions already made elsewhere.

2. **The Moderator** chairs the Assembly and is in charge of proceedings, but should not take sides in debates. Former Moderators may deputise from time to time, should the Moderator wish to take part in debate or to withdraw from the House.
 - (a) When the Moderator rises to speak at any point all other members must yield to the Chair.
 - (b) Members should stand when the Moderator enters or leaves at the beginning or end of proceedings. Members may enter or leave at any time during proceedings, but should do so with as little disturbance as possible. It is a courtesy in so doing to give a slight bow to the Chair.
 - (c) The recommended form of address to the House is simply “Moderator” (not “Mr.” Moderator, etc). Speakers should face towards the House and the microphones, not towards the Moderator.

3. **Councils and Commissions:** Work for which the Assembly is responsible is generally entrusted to various General Assembly Councils and Commissions. These must each present a report to the Assembly. Councils normally have a number of General Assembly Committees working under them, along with permanent Panels and ad-hoc Task Groups. A Commission of Assembly is entrusted with the executive powers of the Assembly, within the terms of its appointment. Members of Commissions, Councils and General Assembly Committees are appointed by the Assembly itself, on the nomination of the General Assembly's Nominations Committee. Councils and Commissions are led by a Convener, supported by a Secretary, with the latter often being a senior member of staff. In what follows the word "Councils" covers Councils, Commissions and the General Assembly Business Committee.

4. **Reports of Councils:** While the Assembly is obliged to "receive" the report of each Council, it does not "adopt" or accept responsibility for the contents of any report. Reports carry only the authority of the Council concerned and not of the Assembly.
 - (a) If found too unsatisfactory the report, or a section of it, may be received and referred back. This is done by an amendment to the resolution "That the report of the [name of Council] be received". Any matter to which the Assembly is to be committed must be stated in a specific resolution. Resolutions should be kept to conclusions, rather than include arguments in support such as are appropriate to reports and speeches. Similarly, speeches in the Assembly carry the authority only of the speaker.
 - (b) Reports are first of all "presented" and the appended resolutions "proposed" en bloc, usually by a Council Convener who will make a speech in support highlighting aspects of the Council's work. The resolutions are then "seconded" en bloc, usually by another officer of the Council, who again speaks in support and usually addresses a different aspect of the Council's work. There is then an opportunity for questions to be asked. Routine and non-controversial resolutions have been grouped into one consolidated resolution for each Council, where appropriate.

5. **Questions to Commissions or Councils:** These should quite strictly be asked only for further information or explanation, whether of something in the report or not in the report but for which the Council carries responsibility; they should not be rhetorical or debating “questions” to score a point. Questions should be written out and placed in the box provided as early as possible during the Assembly. They may also be submitted by e-mail to the Deputy Clerk (deputyclerk@presbyterianireland.org) in advance of the Assembly or during the Assembly, up to 15 minutes before the report in question is scheduled. Questions will normally be limited to two per person and ten minutes in all, unless the Moderator judge that a particular subject merits an extension of these limits.
6. **Resolutions** of Councils: These are then taken in succession, as printed in the General Assembly Reports, and on occasion also in the Supplementary Reports. Resolutions are called by number. Those wishing to speak should at once come forward, or otherwise indicate to the Moderator their desire to speak: it will be helpful if they move in good time to sit on one of the seats reserved for the purpose on the front row, ready for the Moderator to call them. The final resolution of a Council is “that the report of the [name of Council] be received”. This is the point where members may discuss (not ask questions about) any matters in the report or for which the Council should bear responsibility, but which do not arise under any previous resolution.
7. **Timings during debate:** Unless otherwise arranged, speeches are limited as follows:
- | | |
|---|-----------|
| Presenting a group of reports and resolutions | 7 minutes |
| Seconding a group of reports and resolutions | 7 minutes |
| All other speeches | 4 minutes |
- (a) If lapsed business accumulates, these timings may be shortened.
- (b) A flickering light is given 1 minute before the end, a steady light for 30 seconds and a buzz when the time is up. Before commencing, speakers should announce their name and Congregation (or PW, SPUD etc) and Presbytery. Apart from the proposer (or alternatively the seconder) having the right to speak again in closing the debate, no one may speak twice in debating any one resolution or amendment, except to clarify some misunderstanding.

8. **Alternative** format: The Assembly may decide from time to time to conduct a particular item of business using an alternative format. This is usually on the recommendation of the General Assembly Business Committee. In such circumstances alternative rules of debate and timings may apply.
9. **Amendments: These** may be moved without prior notice by any member so as to change the terms of a resolution within its general scope but not so as to introduce another subject. Before debate on an amendment commences, the amendment must be given in writing to the Clerk's desk (or be submitted electronically to deputyclerk@presbyterianireland.org).
 - (a) Amendments may be submitted to the Clerk of Assembly in advance of the business concerned, and if received in sufficient time and licensed by the General Assembly Business Committee, will take precedence over any other amendments.
 - (b) At least one day's notice must be given of an amendment which would substantially affect the scope of a motion or overture. A plea for the outright rejection of a resolution is not an amendment.
 - (c) An amendment, if seconded, must be dealt with before further debate on the original resolution or consideration of any further amendment. If passed, the amendment is then put as a substantive motion, when one more amendment may be considered. If the first two amendments are rejected, one more amendment may be considered before reverting to the original resolution.
10. **Additional resolutions: When a matter is not covered by existing resolutions from a Council** an additional resolution may be submitted by any member or associate as notice of motion for license. Unless there are exceptional circumstances these should be received by the Clerk at least one week before the Assembly. Resolutions rescinding or reversing a previous decision of the Assembly require notice of motion to be first given and accepted at the preceding annual meeting. Those invited to sit and deliberate may "present" resolutions or amendments in the usual way, but these must be formally proposed and seconded by a member of Assembly before being debated.

11. **Voting:** This will normally be by voice, when the Moderator calls for those in favour to say “Aye” and those against to say “No”. The Moderator may also call for a standing vote, with voting cards displayed, to be counted. A vote by ballot will be held when asked for by not fewer than twenty-five members or at the discretion of the Moderator, by the use of voting tickets, to be counted by tellers. Only the votes of those present on the ground floor of the Assembly Hall will be counted. Proxy voting for an absent member is not allowed. A member who has spoken or voted against any decision may intimate his or her personal dissent or protest immediately after the decision has been pronounced, but does not thereby free himself or herself from obligation loyally to implement the decision taken.

12. **Overtures: These are** proposals for a change in the Code, the Church’s Constitution and Government. Changes in rules, of which notice has been given in the printed Reports, may be adopted forthwith if approved by a two-thirds majority, or without such notice if approved with no one voting against. If approved by a lesser majority it is “placed on the books”, to be decided upon at the following Assembly. This applies also to rules governing the Central Ministry Fund and other Ministry Funds. In the Basic Code, where immediate operation is desirable, the change may be adopted temporarily during the intervening year as an “Interim Act”. If an overture contemplates a significant constitutional change it must also be sent down to Presbyteries to be voted on during the intervening year.

13. **Memorials:** These are petitions to the Assembly, usually from some person or body who is not a member of Assembly, such as a subordinate court of the Church, a Church member or group of members, or persons unconnected with the Church. Procedures and forms are laid down by which the circumstances of the Memorial are outlined and a definite request or “prayer” is stated. A Memorial is also the procedure by which someone, whether member of the Assembly or not, asks for exemption from some Church rule on the plea of special circumstances.

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 1

Tuesday – 2.30 pm

Convener: Very Rev Dr RL CRAIG

Secretary: THE CLERK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. On behalf of the General Assembly, the General Council has been conducting its business through eight General Assembly Committees and fourteen Task Groups. The Council has met three times in the past year (October 2017, March and April 2018).
2. In 1 Timothy 3:15 Paul, the Apostle, writes that his propose in writing is that Timothy might know “how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household.” In the past year much of the business of the General Council has been an outworking of how the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is to conduct herself in the world in which she currently bears her witness. For an ease of understanding, a general overview of the business of the General Council is presented under three headings although much of this business is overlapping.

PCI and Government Legislation (Data Protection, the Eighth Amendment)

3. The General Data Protection Regulation has come into force in the UK since last year’s General Assembly; as a consequence a new Task Group was appointed to produce advice and guidelines across all levels of the denomination (see pages 102-104).
4. Within the Republic of Ireland there was much debate on the Eighth Amendment in advance of the referendum which was held on (end of May) 2018. Although there is some divergence between the position of PCI and that of the Eighth Amendment, the Task Group which has been acting on behalf of the General Assembly has recommended that the Eighth Amendment be retained, in preference to its abolition (see page 135).

PCI and Social Changes (Abortion, Transgender, Homosexuality)

5. The debate on the Eighth Amendment is but one of the several social changes which has shaped the work of the General Council. A new

Task Group has been established to assist an appropriate pastoral response on the pressing matter of human identity (see pages 77-78). Alongside this the Dialogue and Resources Task Group has in the past year continued a pastoral conversation for ruling elders (see page 77).

PCI and Inter Church and Inter Faith Discussions

6. In an attempt to ensure more meaningful relationships with other denominations within the UK, delegations from PCI have met with representatives of the United Reformed Church and have continued contact with the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland (see pages 96-98). Alongside this conversation the Doctrine Committee has considered and reported on two matters of faith and practice. First there is a report concerning the sacraments and those who are same-sex attracted (see pages 84-89); second, there is a report concerning involvement in multi-faith civic events (see pages 89-93).

Debate on General Council Business

7. The report of the General Council to the General Assembly is the longest of the Annual Reports and to facilitate the ordering of business in the Assembly, the General Assembly Business Committee will report in its own right at the beginning and the end of the Assembly (10.30am on Tuesday and 1pm on Friday respectively). As over the past few years, the main General Council report will then be considered in five separate sections, as follows:

Section 1 (2.30pm on Tuesday, 5th June):

- Executive Summary
- Support Services Committee
- United Appeal Committee
- Guysmere Centre Task Group
- Priorities Committee
- Memorial Record

Section 2 (3.30pm on Wednesday, 6th June):

- Moderator's Advisory Committee
- Dialogue and Resources Task Group
- Human Identity Task Group

Section 3 (4.30pm on Wednesday, 6th June):

- Doctrine Committee
- Relationship with other Denominations TG
- Church Relations Committee

Section 4 (8pm on Thursday, 7th June):

- General Data Protection Regulation TG
- Engagement and Consultations TG
- Central Prayer Coordination TG
- Use of Congregational Property TG
- Charity Registration TG
- Holding Trustees TG

Section 5 (Friday morning 8th June, approx. 10am):

- Nominations Committee
- 2017 Special Assembly TG
- Review of Moderator's Year TG
- Reformation Celebration TG
- Historical Archiving TG
- Ad-Hoc Business:
 - Calls
 - Healthcare Chaplaincy
 - Peacehaven transfer
 - Eighth Amendment Task Group
 - Congregational Contacts
 - CCLW Structures
 - PHSI Report

Retiring Conveners

8. The length of the report of the General Council in itself is a witness to the unstinting service of so many conveners, committee and task group members. Too many to name in person, they have once again given of themselves both to the Lord and His Church. At this Assembly two Conveners conclude their service:
 - (a) The **Rev David Irvine** has convened the General Assembly's United Appeal Committee since his appointment in June 2015. David brought to this task both a mind capable of understanding the often complex financial aspects of the Committee's work and also a vision for and commitment to the wider mission and ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. During his convenership new ways have been developed of promoting the work of the United Appeal for Mission throughout PCI and the General Assembly's mission agencies have been adequately funded to carry that work forward.
 - (b) **Mr John Hunter, CB**, was appointed Convener of the former Board of Finance and Personnel in June 2009, serving until that Board was thanked for its services and discharged on 31st December

2014 as a result of restructuring. At that point John agreed to accept the convenership of the new Support Services Committee of the General Council from 1st January 2015 onwards, thereby bringing a degree of important continuity to these significant areas of work as restructuring was bedding down. John has brought to both of these convenerships undoubted expertise in good governance combined with a love for and commitment to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and its Lord. He has attended countless meetings and has enabled the new Support Services Committee and its five Panels to get up and running. He hands over his convenership after a work well done.

9. In conclusion, the General Council has been faithfully served and guided by Rev Trevor Gribben, the General Secretary and Rev Jim Stothers, Deputy General Secretary. Our thanks to both of them for their time, support and wisdom. In the past year both of them have put in many extra hours in their service for the Lord. Likewise, the staff in the General Secretary's Department has been efficient as ever in overseeing so much administration on behalf of the Council

The Rev Trevor Gribben writes:

10. This Assembly sees the retirement of the Very Rev Dr Rob Craig from his role as Convener of the General Council. At the time of restructuring Rob convened the General Assembly's Finance and Staffing Commission for two years from June 2014, tasked with the job of implementing the structural changes agreed in principle by the 2014 General Assembly. Early in that task, Rob further agreed to step up to the mark and on 1st January 2015 he took on the new role of Convener of the General Council, the former General Board having been convened by the Clerk of Assembly. Rob's work load in this new role has been both heavy and diverse, with overall responsibility not just for the Council's eight General Assembly Committees and ever-increasing range of ad-hoc Task Groups (14 reporting to this Assembly), but also giving leadership in fulfilling the General Council's role of co-ordinating the overall work of the General Assembly's Councils and dealing with exceptional matters on behalf of the Assembly. All of this has meant not just many miles and numerous meetings, formal and informal, but also the need often to deal with sensitive and challenging issues. To all of this Rob has brought a sharp mind and his characteristic gracious and winsome personality. Along with many others, I, as Clerk and Secretary of the General Council, am thankful to Rob for this service so willingly given to his Church and his Lord.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

INITIAL REPORT

Tuesday morning – 10.30 am

1. The Business Committee has continued to review the work and arrangements of the General Assembly.
2. A **Draft Order of Business for 2018** was agreed and approved by the Committee. This includes the following:
 - (a) As on the last two years, a Friday morning has again been included.
 - (b) As agreed at last year's General Assembly there will two evening business sessions as well as the Evening Celebration on the Wednesday: these will be held on the Tuesday and Thursday. Assembly business will start at 10.30 am on the Tuesday morning and there will be no business session on Thursday morning, starting instead after lunch with business followed by worship.
 - (c) In addition to 'Listening to the Global Church' on the Wednesday afternoon, there will be 'alternative presentations' on the Tuesday evening and Thursday afternoon featuring the work, respectively, of the Council for Social Witness and the Council for Training in Ministry.
 - (d) Attendance at the Tuesday Communion Service has been growing in recent years and so, in addition to the ground floor, Communion will be served in the central section of the gallery.
 - (e) Permission has been given so that signing for the hearing impaired be provided for the Council for Social Witness business on the Friday. There will be opportunity for assistance needs to be declared when registering for the 2019 Assembly.
3. The **Arrangements Panel** has appropriate matters in hand and a budget of £20,000 has been agreed for recommendation to the Assembly.
4. As agreed last year, congregations have been invited to send one additional communicant member or ruling elder, aged 30 or under, to sit and deliberate alongside the representative elder.
5. **Registration Procedure.** While it had been hoped to enable electronic registration of Representative Elders this year, this had not proved possible. However, in place of including Commission forms along with the General Assembly Minutes, ministers have been sent the form by email, and given the option, having printed them out and had them filled in, of returning them by post or scanning them and returning

them by email. A suitable form for registering the names of the additional ‘under 30’ person has been included, for return by either method following appointment by the Kirk Session.

6. **Youth Assembly input** to Assembly. The Youth Assembly has taken place and will provide input to the General Assembly.
7. **The Wednesday Evening** event will be addressed by Rico Tice and, at the invitation of the Moderator, he will also speak at the Wednesday and Thursday **afternoon worship sessions**.
8. Reports from those attending other Assemblies etc are contained in the committee Appendix.
9. **Appointment of Delegations to other Assemblies etc.**
 - (a) Delegates have been appointed to other Church Assemblies and meetings:
 - Church of Ireland Synod in May 2018: The Very Rev Dr Frank Sellar and a local elder;
 - The Methodist Conference in June 2018: The Very Rev Dr Noble McNeely and a local elder.
 - (b) The Clerk, in consultation with the Convener of the General Council, has been authorised to appoint a representative to attend the 2018 Ireland Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends. The following recommendation is made to the 2018 General Assembly:
 - That the Right Rev Dr Charles Mr McMullen and his wife be appointed to attend the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Wales in July 2018.
 - (c) Consideration of an appointment to the 2018 United Reformed Church General Assembly and the 2019 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland will this year take place as part of the report of the Relating to other Denominations Task Group.

INITIAL REPORT – APPENDIX

Reports from other Church Assemblies etc.

Methodist Conference – Lisburn June 2017

Mr Roger Thompson (Elder in Railway Street) reports:

1. As an observer from PCI, I found the Conference interesting, informative and enjoyable and I feel honoured to have been invited to attend as a representative of PCI, along with the Very Rev Dr Frank Sellar. The experience provided a deeper insight into a sister Christian denomination and helped to reveal more fully the many

similarities as well as the various differences between Presbyterianism and Methodism. Most notably it indicated the common challenges that we all face, as parts of the Church of Jesus Christ, in presenting the message of the Gospel in an increasingly secular and materialistic society with little or no evident interest in God.

2. I, along with the other observers and representatives, greatly appreciated the very warm and friendly welcome that members of the conference extended to us over each of the days and Dr Sellar had opportunity of bringing fraternal greetings from our General Assembly.
3. Although the regular events took place in Trinity Methodist Church in Lisburn, the opening service was in Fisherwick Presbyterian Church. Rev Bill Mullally gave his reflections on the past year and the new President Rev Dr Laurence Graham was installed for the year 2017-18. He delivered an uplifting and inspiring address, based on Christ's meeting at the well with the Samaritan woman, with praise led by a mainly black worship group from Dublin Central Mission where he is Superintendent. Dr Graham spoke again towards the end of the conference on his chosen theme 'The Rhythm of Grace, Meet Jesus – Share Jesus'.

Opening Devotions

4. Each day commenced with a time of worship and Bible Study and the meditations focussed on humankind's responsibility as stewards of God's creation. Guest speakers contributed from personal experiences, a minister from Ghana spoke of the serious and damaging effects of climate change on his country, and a refugee from Syria escaping from ISIS now living in N Ireland, recounted numerous difficulties, fears and uncertainties that he has had to face since leaving his homeland. Their stories were profound and disturbing.

The Substance of the Conference

5. The publication prepared for the conference 'Reports and Agenda' covers comprehensively the broad range of the work of the missions, boards and committees of the Methodist Church.
6. Due to the death and funeral of Rev Margaret Ferguson, much respected Superintendent of East Belfast Mission, the start of conference was postponed until the afternoon of the first day. Therefore, the printed agenda had to be revised and rescheduled to include the evening of that day.
7. Reports were well presented and contributors to debates made their points in a clear and orderly manner. Notably, throughout the conference, one of the recurring themes was that every follower of Jesus is called to 'Go and make disciples' or, in other words, all church members, have a vital and active role in ministry.

Inter Church Relations and Covenant Council (Report P60)

8. While the ICR committee has a broader remit in this field, the Council's main involvement is in ongoing meetings between the Methodist Church and the Church of Ireland to discuss ways in which the two denominations can work more closely together.

Conversation on the Work of God

9. This section contains detailed reports from all eight districts of the Methodist Church in Ireland and it provides much interesting information on what has been happening in church work across south and north. There was opportunity for delegates to share how God is at work in their area and this was so popular the chairman had to restrict each contributor to two minutes!

General Committee - Connexional Structures

10. This report from a working party contained details of proposals for a major reorganisation within the church; the joining of the eight current districts into three geographical and numerically viable districts, each with a full time Superintendent to provide oversight, leadership support and vision for the ministry and mission of societies, circuits and ministers. After the report had been presented there were speeches and questions from the floor. Although the motions were passed by a significant majority, further work is required. A substantive motion will be put to conference next year.

Faith and Order

11. Separate reports by this committee were presented on the two distinct subject areas.

12. Human Sexuality and Christian Belief and Practice

During the presentation, conference members were reminded of and encouraged to make use of the specific materials (booklets and study guides) that had been produced by the Committee on this subject.

13. The Theological Basis for Itinerant Ministry

This working paper was not included in the 'Reports and Agenda' conference book, however there was a lengthy verbal presentation. At its conclusion, many speakers from the floor came and contributed many differing points of view on the content of the paper. While conference accepted it, more work and progress are required.

Council on Social Responsibility

14. A substantive report and three supplementary hand-outs were supplied for this presentation and the topics covered in the report included alcohol, abortion, migration, the political situation in Northern Ireland and issues relating to Brexit. The handouts dealt with firstly, the principles governing relationships between Northern Ireland and

the Republic of Ireland and between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom; secondly, the treatment of children and the vulnerable in society in the Republic of Ireland; and thirdly, where the church stands on the Brexit negotiations. It was noted that during the presentation the point was stressed that the church needs to speak into the social and political world on a variety of issues. The reports were given approval.

Board of Ministry

15. The Board consists of two constituent committees, the Ordained Ministry Committee and the Lay Ministry Committee. In addition to the comprehensive report which includes information on the work in each of these areas, there was a supplementary hand-out entitled ‘A Strategy for the development of Lay Ministry in the Methodist Church in Ireland’. The Board has also been engaged in an ongoing review of ministerial formation and theological education. The message that underlies the work of the Board is, again, that ‘All people are called to minister’. The report, covering each of these areas, was received but all require further work and progress.
16. The Very Rev Dr Frank Sellar attended a breakfast organised by the Headway Ireland group in Vic-Ryn Café where Peter Lynas of NI Evangelical Alliance gave a stimulating address on ‘Envisioning the Future – the Church of Tomorrow’.
17. The Rev William (Billy) Davidson of Newtownabbey Mission, Rathcoole, was nominated President elect and Mrs Lynda Neilands Lay Leader for 2018-19.
18. The Conference concluded with an impressive ordination service again in Fisherwick.
19. It was a privilege for us to experience the life and vibrancy of the Methodist Church in Ireland and a sense of God at work among the people in many ways.

The Society of Friends

The Rev Lorraine Kennedy-Ritchie reports:

1. The Society of Friends describe themselves as; “sharing experience of silent worship, seeking to practice Christ’s message of love and compassion unites us. We know ours is not the only path to God, but believe it is the right one for us. Quakerism is rooted in Christianity. We are formally known as the Religious Society of Friends. Currently, there are just over 1,500 members in Ireland.”
2. I had the privilege to represent PCI at the Irish Yearly Meeting again, on this occasion in Rathgar, Dublin, from 20th to 22nd April 2017, a time in which the Quakers from across Ireland meet together. It is always interesting observing how IYM move through business. Reports are read and then time is given for reflection before questions, debate

and decisions made. Special interest groups also take the time to work through issues. Two were of great interest at this year's meeting. The first was Eco issues for local meetings. How can people make changes and a difference in their own environment. It was an extremely practical discussion with goals chosen together. The second was a discussion on tax equality in our world today. The discussion was led by a person from Christian Aid who has great experience in this area. Once again the discussion was very practical, with an explanation of the broader issues followed by how we can make a difference in our own decision making.

Presbyterian Church of Wales
Eglwys Bresbyteriaidd Cymru, Caerdydd, Gorffennaf 3rd-5th, 2017

The Right Rev Dr Noble McNeely reports:

1. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Wales (PCW) met in the splendid facilities of the Metropolitan University of Cardiff. The delegates and guests arrived on a beautiful sunny Monday afternoon and were well prepared for a long opening meeting and Communion Service as they benefitted from the generous hospitality of the university. The evening worship was held at Eglwys y Crwys in Cardiff and conducted by the Moderator, Prof J Gwynfor Jones.
2. The theme for the Assembly was, "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you" (John 20:21). The emphasis throughout the worship and business was on mission and generally there was a deep concern among the participants that the decline in their church membership was critical. The PCW claims 602 congregations, 120 (20%) of which have a membership of no more than 10 persons. Two thirds of the churches have 11-50 members in their congregation. The total membership has declined from 30,000 to 20,000 between 2007 and 2016. The congregations are served by 40 ordained ministers.
3. The annual Davies Lecture was presented by Rev Dafydd Andrew Jones, MA, on the subject 'Oasis of Hope'. The lecture included a historical survey of the decline in moral and social standards and considered the popularisation of humanism in a postmodern society. He stated that "the Welsh are the least religious" and despite this the church must not fall into despair but be faithful to its mission and focus on hope.
4. The Ministries Department was allocated an extended time to make a multimedia presentation using Robert Warren's handbook 'Healthy Churches' produced for the Diocese of London. The seven marks of a healthy church included in this publication formed the framework of the presentation: 1. Energised by faith, 2. Outward looking focus, 3. Seeks to find out what God wants, 4. Faces the cost of change and growth, 5. Operates as a community, 6. Makes room for all, 7. Does a few things and does them well.
5. The emphasis throughout the programme was on mission and outreach and reflected what the church is doing and what could be done

throughout the PCW. Special projects and ministries were highlighted. The effective ministry through the retreat centre ‘Trefeca’, a church-planting initiative, outreach to Chinese students and ‘Stori Pwllheli’ a story telling outreach, were some of the inspiring programmes that were well received by the assembly.

6. Reference was made to the visit of the PCW youth leaders to the youth department of the CCLW of our church. It is hoped that the relationship being formed between the two departments of youth will develop and that the sharing of ideas and programmes will benefit both the church in Wales and in Ireland. The staff in Wales are encouraged by the potential of a team of young people from the PCI being involved in outreach in the summer of 2018.
7. Much time was also given to the issue of appointing a General Secretary of the PCW in anticipation of the retirement of Rev Meirion Morris who has completed five years as secretary. Although the relevant task group had advertised and invited applications there were no applicants for this heavy-duty post. Alternative arrangements and proposals were put to the assembly and following extensive debate an amended resolution was agreed to continue to employ Mr Morris until 31st December 2017. It was hoped that this would give further time for continued consideration of a strategy to provide secretarial support.
8. As is the tradition in the Welsh church the business and the worship was conducted in the indigenous language with welcomed translation for the representatives from British churches and the Presbyterian Church in India. The three hundredth anniversary of the birth of William Williams Pantycelyn, Wales’s most famous hymn writer was acknowledged particularly through the singing of his hymns at the services of worship. These hymns were sung with reverence and the vigour you expect from a gathering of gifted Welsh singers. To hear the familiar and the not so familiar hymns sung in the Welsh language was quite a moving experience. The assembly also included an excellent lecture by Dr W Gwyn Lewis on the life and works of William Williams, Pantycelyn entitled ‘Williams has it...’.
9. The Moderator’s successor for 2017-18 Rev Brian Huw Jones, BEd., BTh., was installed on Tuesday evening of the Assembly. The Moderator elect for 2018-19, Rev Brian Matthews, was elected at the opening meeting following a vote between two candidates.
10. Florence and I thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship we shared with a warm hearted inclusive body of Christ-honouring people who were keenly interested in the health and life of the PCI. There is much we have in common in regard to reforming our church’s approach, in order to address the challenges we face, in an increasingly secular society. Rev Dafydd Andrew Jones in his lecture said, “the church is on the border of modern society”. In the power of the Spirit of God we have to work at how we can break through the border and be where God wants us to be in the service of His kingdom.

Waldensian Assembly (Italy) 2017

The Very Rev Dr Ian McNie reports:

1. Like the early Church the Waldensian Church was born in an atmosphere of persecution and they have often been described as 'Protestants before the Reformation'. Their Confessions of 1120 and 1655 resonate closely with much of our Confession of Faith. At the Synod of 1532 the Waldensians voted to join with the Genevan Reformation, a decision which intensified persecution and drove them to live in the Alpine valleys of Northern Italy, now known as the Waldensian Valleys.
2. This Protestant community, primarily based in Italy with a membership of 22,000 have a few congregations in South America, and in 1979 they merged with the Italian Methodist Church that now constitutes 20% of its membership.
3. The Synod, comprising of 180 members meets annually in Torre Pellice, Northern Italy, is presided over by the President, and the business is determined by the 'Scrutiny Committee', deciding which topics should be given priority. The business of each day is completed before the close of Synod, which commences at 9.30 am and could continue until midnight, or after if necessary.
4. Corresponding delegates were based in the Synod Guesthouse, hospitality was generous and fellowship limited due to the fact that most people spoke Italian and only a few of us were English speakers. Having said this, the translation facilities at the Synod were excellent, enabling us to understand most of what was going on.
5. On Sunday, the first day of the Synod, we were taken by bus into the valleys where a service was held on the site of the signing of an agreement between the Waldensians and the Genevan representatives. This open-air service, even without translation, was not without meaning in so far as many of the hymns were recognised through traditional tunes, and all were able to sing in their own language. Being the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, much was made of the significance of the site and the connection with Geneva. After the service guests were invited to the Waldensian High School for a reception and a talk was given by the Headmaster on the school's unique ethos.
6. The Synod officially opened on Sunday afternoon with an act of worship, during which five new candidates for the ministry were ordained and the invited guests were welcomed. The business started on Monday morning and the presence of regular visitors who attended from England and Scotland enabled us to understand its workings without difficulty. While there were many similarities regarding the conduct of business, it became apparent that the Waldensians were very conscious to avoid the trappings of authoritarianism as practiced by the established church around them, to such an extent that they avoided at all costs the possibility of clerical or centralised imposition.

7. As a denomination the Waldensians are involved in extensive social outreach. This is due to the fact that in Italy all tax payers can opt to ask the Government to give 0.08% as 'gift aid' from their tax contributions. In recent years the Roman Catholic Church has benefited to the tune of over 1 Billion Euros, which it has used to fund the payment of clergy and assist in the repair of church buildings. While there are only 22,000 Waldensians, in recent years, 600,000 Italians have opted to gift aid the Waldensian cause. This enthusiasm is primarily because the Waldensians publish their accounts in the national newspapers and have chosen to use this money for local projects, such as residential homes, funding health care, hospitals, schools, radio and television stations, alongside some global projects in the developing world. This transparency is obviously applauded and appreciated. While these projects in themselves are very commendable, much of the Synod's time was taken up discussing these matters to the extent that other significant spiritual issues appeared to be overlooked. During one afternoon as delegates we visited a residential home to view the work first hand, and on another morning were treated to a lecture and question time on the subject of euthanasia.
8. Italy as a Roman Catholic country does not permit same-sex marriages within the church. After a two-day debate the Waldensians opened the door for its members who are involved in civil partnership, to officially receive a church blessing. This was regularising something that had been previously permitted on an ad-hoc basis, and while the outcome was determined by a significant majority, a few pastors from some of the larger cities who were reaching out to the African communities, expressed deep disapproval, but at times their contribution was received with a less than charitable response.
9. The Synod acknowledged with gratitude the financial contributions the Waldensians receive from local support communities in England, Scotland and the United States. This support assisted pastors who were involved in in-service training and students who were required to complete a compulsory year abroad in the United Kingdom. One such annual visitor and supporter from Scotland, Rev Mary Cranfield, daughter of the famous New Testament scholar, C.E.B. Cranfield, saw to it that the Irish Presbyterians were well looked after.
10. Prior to my attendance at the Synod I was asked to submit an eight-minute speech highlighting issues discussed at our own Assembly. Since some of the Waldensian churches had welcomed refugees and asylum seekers, I highlighted the work of our own International Meeting Point. Recognising in the past the significant history of the persecution of Waldensians I sought to raise awareness of the persecuted church in Syria and Lebanon and spoke of our partnership with churches in India, Pakistan, the Middle East and parts of Africa, and how that it was necessary to not simply acknowledge their plight, but to bring encouragement to those who might feel forgotten.

11. The third area that I alluded to was the whole issue of same-sex marriage and the fractured relationships that this debate created between church and society and even between churches. I highlighted the statement now included in our own wedding ceremony: 'Since the beginning of creation, God in His gracious purpose provided marriage as the accepted way in which a man and a woman may come together as husband and wife. This is the only basis on which marriage can take place within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.' In expressing thanks, the President of the Synod commented, 'that the theological division between the Waldensians and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland was as great as the geographical division between our two countries'. I wasn't given an opportunity to respond to this, but I think I would not disagree with what was said.
12. In respect of inter-church relations, generally speaking it could be said that relationships between the Waldensians and the Roman Catholic Church are cordial. The local bishop was welcomed to the Synod. Having said this, due to the circumstances of the past there is still a keeping of each other at arms-length, and a clear understanding on the part of the Waldensians, that neither in the short or long term will there be an absorption of the Waldensians into the state church.
13. The subject of evangelism, as we would understand it, was not discussed at the Synod, but in a recent publication, 'The Waldensian Story' by Prescott Stephens, he graciously speaks of the Waldensian's involvement with the 'Federation of Evangelical Churches', and the Federation's weekly programme aiming at presenting a Protestant viewpoint on current issues. He claims that in Italy 'there is an intense interest in non-Catholic alternatives, but so far, little commitment to these alternatives'. He speaks of their 'unaggressive' approach. While aggression can be counter-productive, an insipid presentation of truth can be neither helpful or effective. From my observation within the Synod it would appear to me that the few churches that are making the greatest impact have a multi-cultural congregation seeking to worship in a meaningful way, where there is an elevation of God's Word over and against a 'maintenance model', that simply seeks to preserve the past.
14. I spent two evenings with a Waldensian pastor from England, currently serving in Milan with his Ghanaian wife, who ministers within a congregation of ten different nationalities. This young man at times was discouraged and he spoke of some of the challenges he faced within his congregation as he sought to integrate new members into the traditional church, new members whose styles of worship were varied. His personal passion was to see people won for Christ, and I felt that one of my most worthwhile opportunities during my visit was to encourage him within his ministry, I took the opportunity to pray with him and I know that he and his family greatly appreciated it.

15. All in all, my visit to the Waldensian Church was interesting, informative and challenging. Anne and I greatly appreciated the opportunity to be present, but it would be only fair to state that the experience was not the most encouraging, and the comment from the Waldensian President about ‘our theological and geographical division’ was possibly an adequate summary in respect of the emphases our two churches.

ROY PATTON, Convener

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Introduction

Since the autumn of 2017 the Support Services Committee met on two occasions. Both meetings considered reports from its Finance, HR, Property, IT and Creative Production Panels. Given the wide range of issues considered by the Committee this report necessarily focuses on key issues only.

FINANCE PANEL

1. The meeting of the Committee on 10th October reviewed the projected accounts for the various assessment funds for 2017, which were slightly better than anticipated, and considered and agreed budgets and assessment rates for 2018, endorsing the recommendations of the Finance Panel. While the assessment rates for 2018 are unchanged from 2017, there have been some fluctuations in individual budgets, including increases in the Assembly Building Repair Fund and the Prolonged Disability Scheme, as set out in Support Services Appendix 1. The increase in the Repair Fund reflects the cost of the work approved by the General Assembly in 2016, to be completed in April 2018 (May 2018 in the case of the new accommodation for the PHSI) and is designed to reduce the repayment period by one year. A substantial reduction in the Students’ Bursary Fund reflects reduced student numbers. No assessment has been included for a future Special Assembly pending a review. Following a review of budgets for the Incidental Fund in 2017, the Committee agreed allocations for 2018, including the transfer of the cost of the Press Officer to the Incidental Fund (associated with the transfer of the post to the General Secretary’s Department), as set out in Support Services Appendix 2. The Committee agreed to maintain the assessment for the Pension Fund at the level of the employer’s pension contribution rate of 24.0%.
2. The Committee also agreed an increase in the Sterling and Euro Basic Ministerial Minimum of 2% and 1% respectively for 2018, the differential reflecting different inflation rates in the two jurisdictions.

The new rates are set out in Support Services Appendix 3. Similar percentage increases were agreed to the levels of Family Grants and to the levels of grants from the Retired Ministers Fund, the Widows of Ministers Fund and the Prolonged Disability Fund.

3. The Committee gave consideration to a report from the Panel on the pros and cons of a change in the Church's financial year end from 31st December to 31st August – the latter to coincide with the end of the 'church year'. Given that the considerable disruption that would result from a change, the Committee agreed with the Panel's advice that a review should be undertaken into the implications of retaining the existing year end but revising the timetables for the preparation of end year accounts and statistical returns in the light of necessary approval requirements and the filing of accounts with the Charity Commission. That review continues. However, the Committee agreed in principle to a splitting of the annual return for congregations into a statistical part and a financial part, with the completion of the former due by 30th April. The date for the latter will emerge from the outcome of the continuing review. Collated information on the statistical returns was not available to the Panel at its 29th March meeting, due to delays in filing reports on the part of some Presbyteries. They were presented directly to the General Council at its meeting on 10th April and summaries are included in Appendices 4 and 5.
4. The Finance Panel met on 29th March primarily to consider the draft accounts for the General Assembly for the year ended 31st December 2017. The Panel was pleased to note that no issues, which would require a change to the figures, had been identified to date by the auditors, although some additional disclosures or notes might be necessary. Panel members noted the significant pension credit in relation to the PCI Pension Scheme (2009), as determined under the Accounting Standard FRS 102, accompanied by detailed notes in the accounts. The General Council subsequently approved the Annual Report and Accounts for 2017 on the understanding that there were no significant audit issues and that the auditors would state that the accounts give a 'true and fair view'.
5. During the year, there were no pre-65 retirements. Since the last General Assembly the following were granted leave to retire at or over age 65 by their Presbyteries: Rev Stephen Williams (Union Theological College); Rev Ivan Neish (Abbot's Cross); Rev John Noble (Balteagh and Bovevagh); Rev Elizabeth Hughes (Whitehouse); Rev Alastair Bill (Saintfield Road); Rev Donald Patton (Ballygilbert); Rev Amanda Best (Ramelton and Kilmacrennan) and Rev Robert Buick (Carlisle Road and Crossroads). The Rev Robert Bell (Ballyclare) has sought permission to retire on or after his 64th birthday and an appropriate resolution is appended.
6. Other issues considered by the Finance Panel included the need to strengthen arrangements for managing risks, not least in regard to mitigating actions. The Committee also approved new Guidance

Notes and Template Accounts for congregations designed to help them meet the filing requirements of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

HR PANEL

7. The Committee endorsed a recommendation from the Panel at its October meeting for an increase in the sterling and euro salary scales of administrative and executive staff of 2% and 1% respectively – the same increase as in the Basic Ministerial Minimum. An outline of current staffing levels is outlined in Support Services Appendix 7.
8. The Committee welcomed a new policy agreed by the Panel in respect of ‘Dignity at Work’, designed to prevent bullying in the workplace. It also confirmed the existing policy in regard to Career Breaks and a Protocol for Severe Weather. In regard to the review of the contract with Peninsula Business Services for HR and health and safety advice, the Panel received legal advice on the timing of a new tendering exercise, namely at the end of the current contract in 2019. It noted the need to review personnel policies, procedures and practices in the light of the new GDPR set to come into force in May 2018.
9. The Committee followed up a previous agreement to introduce a new Staff Support and Development Scheme for executive and administrative staff in Assembly Buildings, by reviewing draft documentation for the scheme. Following the completion of task lists for all staff, the new system is due to be introduced in 2018 with appropriate training of all those involved.
10. Finally, the Committee commended the work of the Personnel Department in regard to the employment issues associated with the transfer of Ard Cluan and York House to a new facility, Trinity House, Garvagh.

PROPERTY PANEL

11. Much of the work of the Property Panel during the year concerned the refurbishment of the ground floor of Assembly Buildings to provide new conference and exhibition space, plus accommodation for the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland. The new facilities are due to be handed over by the contractor by the middle of April in the case of the conference and exhibition space and the middle of May in the case of the PHSI accommodation, at a cost of £1.1m plus VAT. It remains to develop the new Visitor Exhibition in the reception area, before a relaunch of the new facilities in the late autumn of 2018. Associated with the relaunch, a sub-committee has been appointed to develop a rebranding of the new facilities, replacing the current logo. Consideration is also being given to the development of a new

marketing strategy, not least in order to compensate for the loss of income from the closure of the retail facilities on the Mall and a reduction in room hire as a consequence of the refurbishment.

12. The Committee welcomed a request from Carnmoney Presbyterian Church to use the new facilities on the ground floor for Sunday afternoon worship as part of their planned outreach in the city centre and Cathedral Quarter.
13. Finally, the Committee received an update on the development of a new structure for the Buildings Department and expressed its thanks to Mr Harry Orr, who retired at the end of March, for his work in Assembly Buildings over the last 29 years.

IT PANEL

14. The Committee is very conscious of the importance in the day-to-day running of the Church of its IT Department. It is aware of many pressures on the department from different parts of the Church as it seeks to prioritise competing demands, some of which arise at short notice. Better planning would help all parties to programme the work of the department in developing necessary IT services. In that regard, the Committee requested the Priorities Committee to add to their documentation a checklist of Support Services Departments that must be consulted when major projects are proposed.
15. Arrangements are in hand to recruit an additional member of staff to the small team. In respect of policy development, work has begun on the development of an updated version of the Acceptable Use Policy covering the use of hardware and software. Finally, the Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Panel that meeting data protection regulations should be a key risk recorded on the General Council's Risk Register.

CREATIVE PRODUCTION PANEL

16. The Committee agreed a new Magazine Policy, designed to enhance the *Presbyterian Herald's* attractiveness to readers, which had been the subject of extensive consultation with Councils. It also agreed to a new Writing Style Guide to ensure consistency in all formal communications from departments in Assembly Buildings, to be introduced with appropriate training for staff immediately after the 2018 General Assembly. The Committee noted that further work was required on Design Guidelines covering fonts, size of titles etc. Consultation also took place on a new Web Policy. Finally, the General Council approved an increase in the cover price of the *Presbyterian Herald* from £1.00 to £1.50, to reflect increased production costs and the increased size of the magazine to include content from the old *Reach Out* magazine.

FAMILY GRANTS TASK GROUP

17. The Committee agreed a recommendation from the Family Grants Task Group on a more equitable allocation of the monies available in support of eligible families. The Committee confirmed the current division between Child Allowances and Tuition Grants, with the latter only being payable in Northern Ireland in respect of those in Further and Higher Education. In the case of the Republic of Ireland, Tuition Grants would continue to be payable at all levels (in the absence of appropriate fee-free education at primary and secondary levels). In both jurisdictions the provision of Tuition Grants would be subject to there being an actual fee incurred. Family income would continue to be taken into account on the same banding principle as at present. The scheme adopted by the General Council is set out in Appendix 7.

JOHN HUNTER, Convener

SUPPORT SERVICES

APPENDIX 1

2018 ASSESSMENT RATES AND ALLOCATIONS

The proposed rates of Assessment for 2018 are:

Assessment Band	Assessable Income (£/€)		Assessment Rate
	From	To	
1	0	10,999	0.00%
2	11,000	64,999	14.50%
3	65,000	129,999	10.75%
4	130,000	194,999	7.25%
5	195,000	259,999	3.50%
6	260,000	and above	0.00%

(Note: the above is unchanged from 2017)

It is proposed that amounts collected through the assessment system are allocated on the following percentages

Assessment Fund	Projected Allocation for 2018 £	Projected Allocation for 2018 %	Actual Allocation for 2017
Central Ministry Fund	£1,800,000	41.29%	41.76%
Retired Ministers Fund	£425,000	9.75%	9.28%
Widows of Ministers Fund	£400,000	9.17%	9.86%
Prolonged Disability Fund	£75,000	1.72%	0.58%
Incidental Fund	£750,000	17.20%	15.55%
Church House Repairs Fund	£525,000	12.04%	10.90%
Special Assembly	–	–	0.58%
Ministerial Development Fund	£125,000	2.87%	2.32%
Sick Supply Fund	£10,000	0.23%	0.35%
Students Bursary Fund	£250,000	5.73%	8.82%
TOTAL	£4,360,000	100.00%	100.00%

SUPPORT SERVICES

APPENDIX 2

2018 INCIDENTAL FUND BUDGET

Payments to or on behalf of Councils	£	£
(i) General Council		
General Work	3,500	
Dialogue Resources Task Group	2,500	
GDPR Compliance	22,500	
Assembly Arrangements	20,000	
Church Relations Committee		
– Irish Council of Churches	22,167	
– Irish Inter-Church Meeting	10,918	
– Conference of European Churches	5,600	
– Comm Protestant Churches Europe	1,300	
– World Comm Reformed Churches	13,000	
– General Church Relations (expenses)	<u>5,000</u>	106,485
(ii) Council for Public Affairs		
General Work incl conferences	1,500	
Education Grants	11,000	
Dealing with the past project	<u>2,500</u>	15,000
(iii) Linkage Commission		
General Work	6,500	
Church Architecture and Manses Panel	8,250	14,750
Moderator expenses allowance		30,000
Printing for General Assembly		10,000
Postage, , admin and other		12,500
Insurance		7,000
Travel General Assembly and Councils etc.		9,500
Allowance to Congregations re Conveners		9,500
Legal fees		25,000
Costs of General Secretary's Department		352,485
Support Services Charges		103,000
UK Borders Agency		500
Presbyterian Historical Society		22,250
Youth Link		10,500
Churches Legislation Advisory		2,575
Peninsula Employment Law and Health and Safety		<u>17,300</u>
Total		<u><u>748,345</u></u>

SUPPORT SERVICES

APPENDIX 3

2018 RATES AND ALLOWANCES

1. Basic and Appropriate Ministerial Minimum

	Northern Ireland		Republic of Ireland	
	2018 £	2017 £	2018 €	2017 €
Basic Ministerial Minimum	26,172	25,659	39,557	39,165
After 1 years' service	26,434	25,916	39,953	39,557
After 2 years' service	26,696	26,173	40,349	39,949
After 3 years' service	26,958	26,430	40,745	40,341
After 4 years' service	27,220	26,687	41,141	40,733
After 5 years' service	27,482	26,944	41,537	41,125
After 6 years' service	27,744	27,201	41,933	41,517
After 7 years' service	28,006	27,458	42,329	41,909
After 8 years' service	28,268	27,715	42,725	42,301
After 9 years' service	28,530	27,972	43,121	42,693
After 10 years' service	28,792	28,229	43,517	43,085
After 11 years' service	29,054	28,486	43,913	43,477
After 12 years' service	29,316	28,743	44,309	43,869
After 13 years' service	29,578	29,000	44,705	44,261
After 14 years' service	29,840	29,257	45,101	44,653
After 15 years' service	30,102	29,514	45,497	45,045
After 16 years' service	30,364	29,771	45,893	45,437
After 17 years' service	30,626	30,028	46,289	45,829
After 18 years' service	30,888	30,285	46,685	46,221
After 19 years' service	31,150	30,542	47,081	46,613
After 20 years' service	31,412	30,799	47,477	47,005

2. Family Grants

	2018	2017
Birth to 10 yrs	£369 (€1,059)	£362 (€1,049)
11 to 15 yrs	£557 (€1,675)	£546 (€1,658)
16 yrs and over		
At school	£836 (€3,097)	£820 (€3,066)
At university	£2,783 (€5,166)	£2,728 (€5,115)
Bands (joint incomes),		
Reductions Nil up to	£29,743 (€44,295)	£29,160 (€43,856)
Up to (£1 for every £5)	£40,015 (€59,579)	£39,230 (€58,989)
Above (£1 for every £2)	£29,160 (€43,856)	£39,230 (€58,989)

3. Retired Ministers, Widows of Ministers and Prolonged Disability Funds

Retired Ministers Fund maximum retirement pension for 2017 is £12,487.

Widows of Ministers Fund maximum retirement annuity for 2017 is £6,867.

Prolonged Disability Fund maximum grant for 2017 is £12,558.

SUPPORT SERVICES APPENDIX 4

SUMMARY OF PRESBYTERY RETURNS FOR YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2017

		[----- INCOME -----]				[----- EXPENDITURE -----]						
		Opening Balance	Assessment	Other	Total Income	Presbytery Clerk	Other Staff	Insurance	Other	Total Expenditure	Surplus (Deficit)	Closing Balance
1	Ards	18,938	19,647	180	19,827	(11,804)	(6,850)	(137)	(1,610)	(20,401)	(574)	18,364
2	Armagh	3,929	11,925	4	11,929	(10,234)	(300)	(221)	(828)	(11,583)	346	4,275
3	Ballymena	9,490	18,510	3,571	22,081	(11,860)	(3,560)	(221)	(6,111)	(21,752)	329	9,819
4	Belfast North	7,953	17,287	4,700	21,987	(8,492)	(3,212)	(462)	(3,680)	(15,846)	6,141	14,094
5	Belfast South	13,678	14,001	12,551	26,552	(9,125)	(2,133)	(1,745)	(13,823)	(26,826)	(274)	13,404
6	Belfast East	54,621	23,027	1,689	24,716	(13,225)	(1,600)	(221)	(15,376)	(30,422)	(5,706)	48,915
7	Carrickfergus	7,635	12,885	11	12,896	(9,685)	(551)	(137)	(2,197)	(12,570)	326	7,961
8	Coleraine & Limavady	40,973	13,115	2,031	15,146	(11,493)	(300)	(220)	(4,325)	(16,338)	(1,192)	39,781
9	Derry & Donegal	43,447	20,937	132,515	153,452	(12,004)	(1,348)	(221)	(51,413)	(64,986)	88,466	131,913
10	Down	26,985	10,961	55	11,016	(9,575)	(2,000)	(307)	(5,339)	(17,221)	(6,205)	20,780
11	Dromore	5,543	14,186	5,180	19,366	(9,386)	(2,125)	(221)	(2,484)	(14,216)	5,150	10,693
12	EDublin & Munster	53,081	27,641	25,722	53,363	(12,271)	(22,787)	(165)	(13,569)	(48,792)	4,571	57,652
13	I veagh	18,500	9,915	8,006	17,921	(12,795)	(500)	(221)	(5,553)	(19,069)	(1,148)	17,352
14	Monaghan	66,761	5,295	9,368	14,663	(2,300)	(2,539)	(642)	(12,476)	(17,957)	(3,294)	63,467
15	Newry	8,439	10,329	22,907	33,236	(7,657)	(300)	(137)	(2,149)	(10,243)	22,993	31,432
16	Omagh	14,850	10,912	602	11,514	(7,814)	(1,875)	(221)	(1,723)	(11,633)	(119)	14,731
17	Route	159,043	12,767	90,280	103,047	(9,708)	(869)	(221)	(7,635)	(18,433)	84,614	243,657
18	Templepatrick	49,767	16,391	39,018	55,409	(8,736)	(2,938)	(306)	(78,360)	(90,340)	(34,931)	14,836
19	Tyrone	6,031	12,132	46	12,178	(9,646)	(1,000)	(137)	(1,165)	(11,948)	230	6,261
Sterling		489,822	248,927	323,346	572,273	(173,239)	(31,461)	(5,356)	(203,771)	(413,827)	158,446	648,268
Euro		119,842	32,936	35,090	68,026	(14,571)	(25,326)	(807)	(26,045)	(66,749)	1,277	121,119

SUPPORT SERVICES**APPENDIX 5****SUMMARY OF CONGREGATIONS ANNUAL STATISTICAL RETURNS
AND GRAPHS****TABLE ONE****PERSONS AND AGENCIES**

	2016	2017	Increase	Decrease
Retired Ministers	240	233	0	7
Ministers in Active Duty	371	375	4	0
Retired Missionaries	16	16	0	0
Missionaries in Active Duty	39	35	0	4
Total Ministers and Missionaries	666	659	0	7
Licensings during year	12	12	0	0
Congregations	538	537	0	1
Total Families	95,895	94,112	0	1,783
Persons of All Ages	220,478	217,363	0	3,115
Contributors to FWO or Stipend	73,391	71,849	0	1,542
Baptisms	1,336	1,330	0	6
Admitted to Lord's Table for First Time	1,575	1,542	0	33
Communicants	97,943	96,217	0	1,726
Attended at Least One Communion during year	59,738	58,699	0	1,039
Ruling Elders in Kirk Session	5,903	5,741	0	162
Number on Rolls in Sunday School and Bible Classes	17,500	18,666	1,166	0
Attending Non-Uniformed Organisations for Children	20,628	20,593	0	35

TABLE TWO
CONGREGATIONAL INCOME

	2016		2017		% Difference	
	£	€	£	€	N.I.	R.of I.
Assessable Income (gross)	35,972,865	3,852,720	36,929,769	4,065,460	2.7%	5.5%
Building Fund etc	16,754,333	1,348,702	17,300,156	1,227,342	3.3%	-9.0%
Missions and Charities	7,515,712	479,513	7,794,578	521,976	3.7%	8.9%
Raised from other sources	6,257,829	1,411,461	6,857,453	680,909	9.6%	-51.8%
Organisational Income	5,914,038	238,001	5,606,012	233,810	-5.2%	-1.8%
Total Receipts	72,414,777	7,330,397	74,487,968	6,729,497	2.9%	-8.2%

TABLE THREE
CONGREGATIONAL EXPENDITURE

	2016		2017		% Difference	
	£	€	£	€	N.I.	R.of I.
Paid to ministers, other salaries and wages, allowances to ministers and others	19,060,597	1,588,296	19,238,287	1,510,063	0.9%	-4.9%
Payments under Assembly Assessments	6,094,203	670,493	6,192,215	702,875	1.6%	4.8%
Building, Repairs etc.	14,362,399	971,513	12,543,020	1,088,739	-12.7%	12.1%
United Appeal Schemes	3,162,260	235,729	3,281,877	238,578	3.8%	1.2%
Supplementary Schemes						
Other Religious and Charitable Objects	6,955,035	717,044	7,683,975	750,298	10.5%	4.6%
Organisations	5,822,025	365,716	5,515,274	257,428	-5.3%	-29.6%
General Expenses	10,752,713	1,497,291	11,712,938	1,802,283	8.9%	20.4%
Total Payments	66,209,232	6,046,082	66,167,586	6,350,264	-0.1%	5.0%

TABLE FOUR
CONGREGATIONAL FUND BALANCES

	Opening 2017		Closing 2017		% Difference	
	£	€	£	€	N.I.	R. of I.
Unrestricted Funds	29,563,572	2,932,990	31,841,732	3,032,478	7.7%	3.4%
Restricted Funds	93,027,692	8,471,028	100,174,767	8,791,689	7.7%	3.8%
Total Fund Balances	122,591,264	11,404,018	132,016,499	11,824,167	7.7%	3.7%

TABLE FIVE**MINISTERS' INCOME AND ALLOWANCES (SEE NOTES)**

	2016	2017	% Difference
	£	£	
Total Ministerial Income (active Duty - Note2)	11,607,735	11,775,980	1.4%
Stipend Paid	10,340,800	10,295,374	-0.4%
Allowances			
Light, Heat, etc Ministerial Duties			
Total	2,630,561	2,614,245	-0.6%

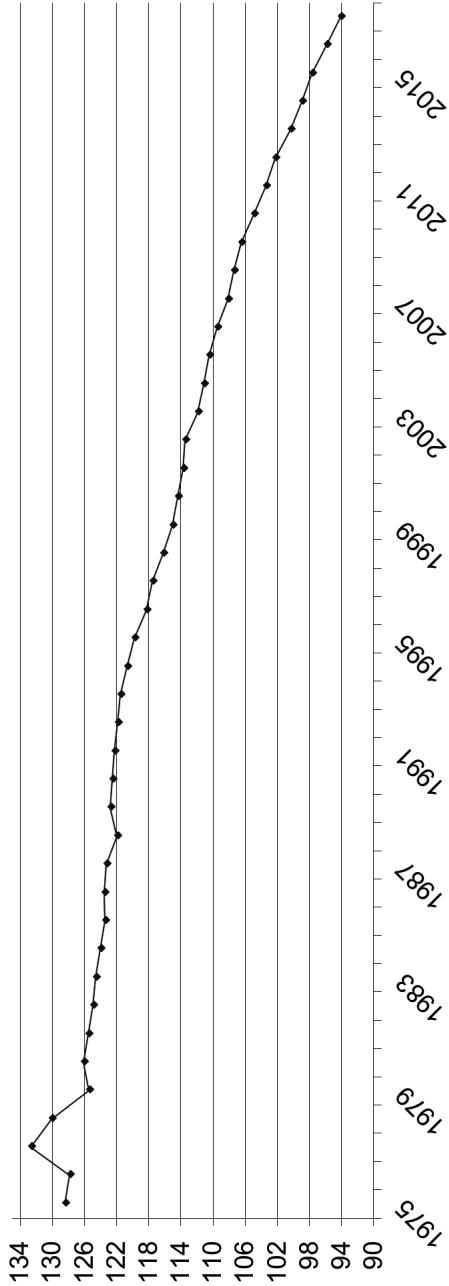
Note 1 Figures for the Republic of Ireland have been converted into £STG using the average value of the Euro for the relevant year (£1/€1.1413)

Note 2 This refers only to 327 ministers in charge of congregations, excluding Assistants, Chaplains, Missionaries, Professors, Administrative Officers and Ministers in recognised service in special work.

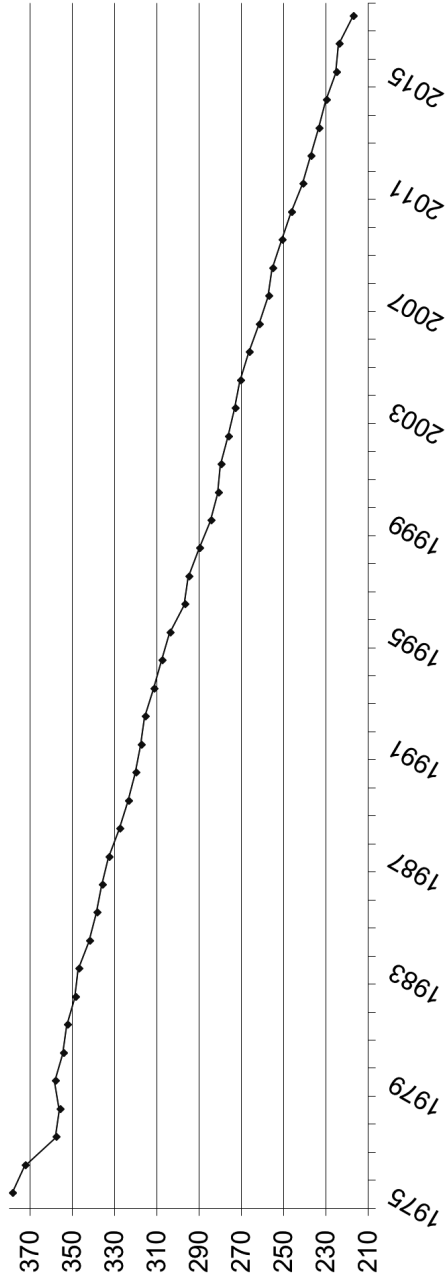
TABLE SIX**PERSONS**

	2016	2017
Persons who are aged 18 and under	39,959	37,473
Average attendance at Sunday Worship		
– Morning	71,250	69,748
– Evening	17,035	16,388
Average attendance at Bible Study/Fellowship	20,347	20,962

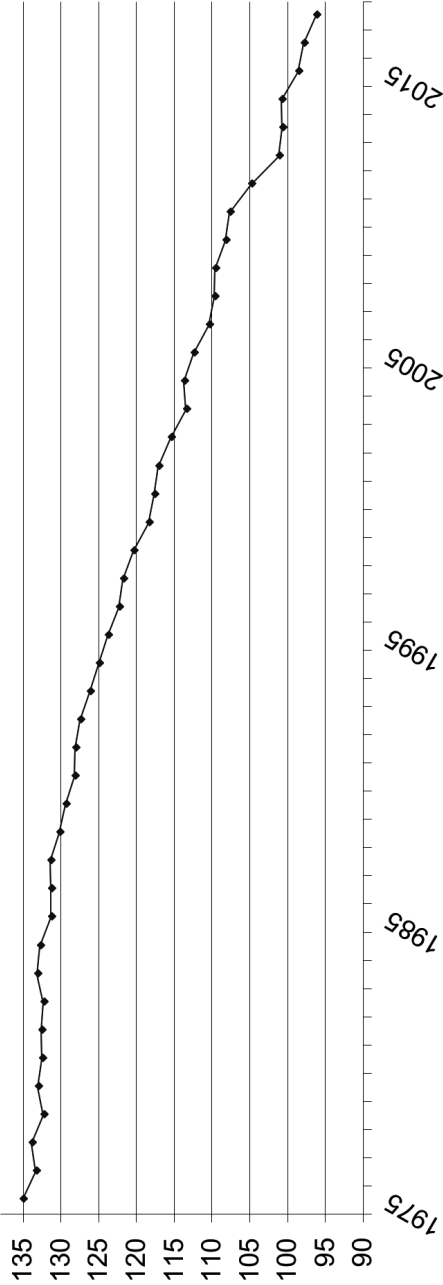
FAMILIES ('000)



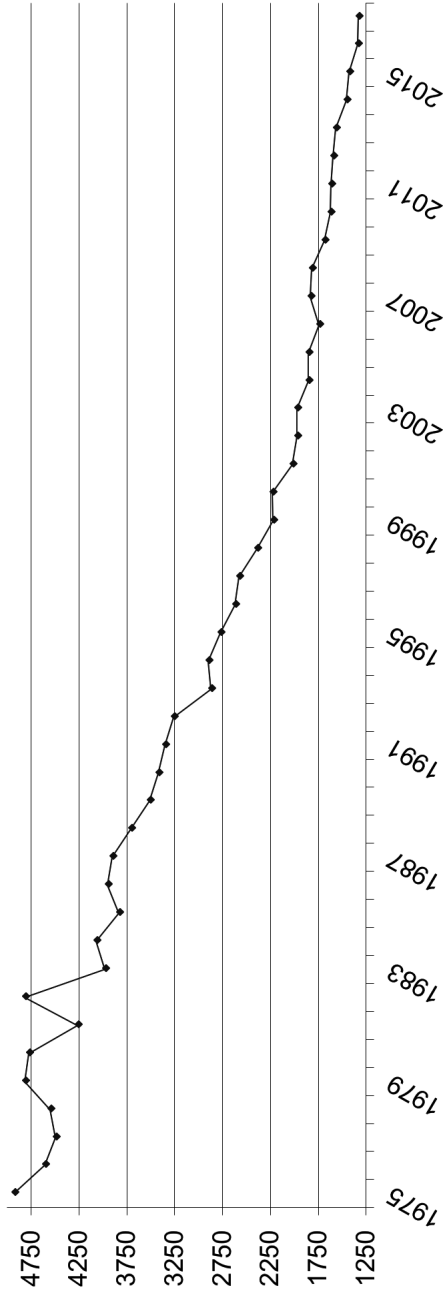
PERSONS ('000)



COMMUNICANTS ('000)



BAPTISMS



SUPPORT SERVICES

APPENDIX 6

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT STAFFING

Sterling salary scales of posts in Assembly Buildings on 1st January 2018

EXECUTIVE POSTS

Scale 1 (£24,745 - £29,399)

IT Support Manager, (ITD)

Presbyterian Women Support Officer (CCLW)

Scale 2 (£27,945 - £33,616)

Property Support Officer (0.8 post) (FSD)

Children's Development Officer (CCLW)

Finance Manager (FSD)

Creative Production Support Officer (including Editorial Responsibilities) (CPD)

Women's Ministry and PW Development Officer (CCLW)

Finance Manager (FSD)

Creative Production Support Officer (Press and Web) (CPD)

Payroll and Assessment Manager (FSD)

Personnel Support Officer (PD)

Youth Development Officer (CCLW)

“Taking Care” Programme Co-ordinator

Discipleship Development Officer (CCLW)

Mission Support Officer (Partnership) (MD)

Scale 3 (£31,267 - £38,108)

Assistant Residential and Supported Services Manager (CSW)

Mission Support Officer (Member Care) (MD)

Head of Creative Production (CPD)

Programme Development Officer (CCLW)

Public Affairs Officer (GSD)

Training Development Officer (CCLW)

Building Manager (PSD)

Mission Development Officer (CCLW)

Scale 4 (£34,462 - £43,054)

Senior Finance Manager (FSD)
 Head of Personnel (PD)
 IT Development and Support Manager (ITD)
 Residential and Supported Services Manager (CSW)

Scale 6 (£40,928 - £49,862)

Deputy Clerk of Assembly and Deputy General Secretary
 Secretary of the Council for Mission in Ireland
 Secretary of the Council for Social Witness
 Secretary of the Council for Global Mission
 Secretary of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness

Scale 7 (£46,438 - £59,733)

Clerk of Assembly and General Secretary
 Financial Secretary

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED POSTS**Scale 1 (£14,084 - £16,266)**

Telephonist (0.4 post) (PSD)

Scale 2 (£15,154 - £17,526)

Administrative Assistant (CCLW)
 Administrative Assistant (0.7 post) (FSD)
 Personnel Assistant (0.74 post) (PD)
 Administrative Assistant, PW (CCLW)
 Administrative Assistant (Job Share) (MD)
 'Taking Care' Administrator (CSW)
 Administrative Assistant (0.68 post) (Purchase Ledger) (FSD)
 Handyperson (PSD)
 Personnel/Administrative Assistant (0.8 post) (PD/CSW)
 Assistant Receptionist and Telephonist (PSD) (higher salary protected)

Scale 3 (£17,005 - £19,663)

Administrative Assistant (GSD)
 Administrative Assistant (Sales Ledger) (job share 0.4 post)
 Senior Personnel Assistant (Job Share) (PD)
 Senior Administrative Assistant (job share 1.2 post) (CSW)
 Senior Administrative Assistant (0.5 post) (MD)
 Deputy Buildings Manager (PSD)

Senior Administrative Assistant, PW (CCLW)
Information Officer/Receptionist (0.6 post) (PSD)

Scale 4 (£19,268 - £22,189)

Senior Administrative Assistant (Partnerships) (MD)
Senior Administrative Assistant (Member Care) (MD)
Payroll and Administrative Assistant (1.77 posts) (FSD)
Senior Administrative Assistants (x 2 job share) (CCLW)
Senior Communications Assistant (Press and Web) (0.6 post) (CPD)
Senior Administrative Assistant (0.6 post) (FSD)
Senior Communications Assistant (Pub) (2 x 0.6 post) (CPD)
Senior Administrative Assistant (CCLW)

Scale 5 (£21,081 - £24,338)

Senior Creative Production Technician (CPD)
Personal Assistant and Senior Administrative Assistant (MD)
Assistant Accountant (FSD)
Senior Personnel Administrator (PD)
Personal Assistant and Senior Administrative Assistant (job share)
(GSD)
IT Support Officer x 2 (ITD)
Financial and Administrative Assistant (0.74 post) (FSD)
IT Support and Development Officer (0.8 post) (ITD)

Scale 5 (Enhanced) (£23,282 - £26,615)

Personal Assistant and Office Supervisor (CCLW)
Personal Assistant and Office Supervisor (MD)
Personal Assistant and Office Supervisor (CSW)

Scale 5 (Enhanced pt 25-33) (£23,282 - £28,694)

Senior Personal Assistant and Office Supervisor (GSD)

Sterling salary scales of posts in other locations on 1st January 2018

EXECUTIVE POSTS

Scale 2 (£27,945 - £33,616)

College Registrar/Bursar, Union College
 College Librarian, Union College
 Minister/Ministry Co-ordinator, Kinghan Church (CSW)
 Chaplain in Residence (MD)
 University Chaplain UUJ, (MD)
 Lecturer in Historical Theology, Union College
 Lecturer in Biblical Studies, Union College

Scale 4 (£34,462 - £43,054)

Dean of Ministerial Studies and Development (Union College)

Scale 5 (£38,108 – £46,438)

Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies and Director of Post-Graduate Studies, Union College

Scale 6 (£40,928 - £49,862)

Professor of Church History, Union College (higher salary protected)
 Professor of New Testament Studies, Union College (higher salary protected)
 Professor of Practical Theology, Union College (higher salary protected)
 Professor of Systematic Theology, Union College

Scale 7 (£46,438 - £59,733)

Principal of Union Theological College

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED POSTS

Scale 1 (£14,084 - £16,266)

Clerical Officer (3 p/t) OPS (CSW)
 Receptionist (Term Time), Union College

Scale 2 (£15,154 - £17,526)

Clerical Officer - Carlisle House (part time) (CSW)
 Clerical Officer, (3 FT and 1 PT) OPS (CSW)
 Clerical Officer, Kinghan Church (part time) (CSW)
 Custodian, Union College
 Library Assistant (part time), Union College

Scale 3 (£17,005 - £19,663)

Marriage and Guidance Co-ordinator (CCLW)
Administrative Assistant (part time), Union College
Senior Clerical Officer (part time), Carlisle House (CSW)
Senior Secretary, Union College (0.6 post)
Senior Secretary, Union College

Scale 4 (£19,268 - £22,189)

Administrator, Derryvolgie (MD)
Senior Secretary, Union College
Deputy Librarian, Union College

Scale 5 (Enhanced) (£23,282 - £26,615)

Assistant Chaplain, QUB (MD)
Resident Manager, Tritonville Close (Euro Scale) (CSW)

SUPPORT SERVICES

APPENDIX 7

PROPOSED FAMILY GRANT ARRANGEMENTS

Family Grant Scheme

This scheme was approved by the General Council in 2018. It provides “Child Allowance Grants” and “Tuition Grants” to eligible ministers subject to the conditions set out in the scheme.

1. Eligibility to Apply

The following are eligible to apply for Family Grants

- Ministers in active duty in congregations
- Licentiates
- Retired Ministers under the care of Presbytery

Ministers without charge, Ministers appointed to positions in Assembly Buildings or to positions under a Council of the General Assembly are not eligible.

2. Grants Payable

The following grants are payable for the academic year 2018/19.

Grant Category	Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland
1. Birth to final year primary school	Child Allowance £375 PLUS Tuition Grant £Nil	Child Allowance €575 PLUS Tuition Grant up to €475
2. Secondary School	Child Allowance £550 PLUS Tuition Grant £Nil	Child Allowance €850 PLUS Tuition Grant up to €800
3. Further and Higher Education (claimable up to and including the academic year in which the student becomes 24)	Child Allowance £825 PLUS Tuition Grant up to £2,000	Child Allowance €1,250 PLUS Tuition Grant up to €4,000

The above grants will be reduced if gross family income exceeds the levels as set out in section 4.

The level of grants will be determined annually by the Support Services Committee of the General Council on the recommendation of its Finance Panel.

3. Processing of Claims

- (a) A Claim Form will be issued by the Financial Secretary's Department in June at the end of the academic year i.e. the grants are paid retrospectively.
- (b) The Claim Form should be returned to the Financial Secretary's Department as soon as possible but no later than 30th September.
- (c) Grants will be paid in October through the payroll system. All grants are deemed to be taxable. In Northern Ireland the grants will be paid with tax and national insurance accounted for. In the Republic of Ireland ministers should declare the grants via their annual tax return.
- (d) Claims for Tuition Grants must be supported by evidence of payment and the maximum Tuition Grant that will be paid is the lower of the amount of the grant or the amount of fees incurred.
- (e) Further and Higher Education includes any course at a University or College of Further Education. Where a student resits GCSE/A Level exams at(?) such the Secondary School tuition grant is claimable.

4. Grant Reductions for Family Income

The above grants will be payable in full if Total Family Income, as defined below, falls below the Appropriate Ministerial Minimum (AMM) for 20 years' service. Where total family income is above this amount the following reductions will apply (2018 rates shown)

Total Family Income	Reduction
Up to 20 year AMM i.e. £31,412/€47,477	Nil
Above AMM up to AMM plus 1/3rd i.e. £41,883/€63,303	£1/€1 for every £5/€5 i.e. maximum reduction £2,094/€3,165
Above AMM plus 1/3rd i.e. £41,883/€63,303	£1/€1 for every £2/€2

Total Family Income is regarded as:

- A minister and spouse's taxable pay for the relevant tax year ending within the academic year for which a claim is made. This includes any taxable pay as shown on the end of year tax form issued by the Financial Secretary's Department plus any other taxable income which will be declared on a tax return such as other earned income, bequest income, endowment interest, rental

income (less allowable expenses), personal investment income, interest, taxable Social Security Benefits and any other income subject to income tax. In summary the total taxable income for the relevant tax year.

- For ministers in **Northern Ireland** the figures should be for the tax year ended 5th April which falls within the academic year (i.e. for the 2018/19 academic year it would be the tax year ended 5th April 2019).
- For ministers in the **Republic of Ireland** the figures should be for the tax year ended 31st December which falls within the academic year (i.e. for the 2018/19 academic year it would be the tax year ended 31st December 2018).

5. Scholarships

Grants payable will be reduced by £1/€1 for every £1/€1 over £1,000/€1,500 received by way of scholarship or other monetary grant (not including student loans) per child at Further or Higher Education.

6. Tuition Grants

All claims for tuition grants must be supported by evidence of payment i.e. a copy of a receipt or invoice. The maximum grant which will be paid is the lower of the amount specified in 2 or the amount paid by the minister.

Only tuition fees will be paid, voluntary or other contributions that may be payable do not count as a tuition fee.

UNITED APPEAL COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met on the following dates:
 - (a) Friday, 8th February 2018 – to review the 2017 accounts, the response to the 2017 Appeal and to confirm grants to Councils for that year.
 - (b) Friday, 23rd March 2018 – to prepare for meetings with Councils in relation to their 2019 grants requests.
 - (c) Monday, 26th March 2018 – to meet with Councils and discuss their budget submissions and then to consider recommendations to the General Council for the 2019 Appeal.

The 2017 Appeal

2. The Committee wishes to express its thanks to the congregations who supported the United Appeal in 2017. When contributions for the 2017 Appeal were closed at the end of January 2018 £3,301,553 (2017: £3,218,252) had been received from congregations towards the

Appeal Target of £3,460,000, a shortfall of some £158,467. Once late contributions for the 2016 Appeal, trust fund income and donations were taken into account the excess against budgeted income was £8,983 (2017 shortfall of £53,984).

3. During 2017 the Council for Congregational Life and Witness returned previously allocated grants of £150,000. This was primarily due to savings in staffing costs as a result of vacancies and the timing of appointments.
4. In 2017 420 congregations (2016: 406) met or exceeded their target of honour, 106 congregations (2016: 121) did not achieve their target and 14 congregations (2016: 8) had made no contribution when the accounts for 2017 were closed. The Committee would remind these congregations of their obligation under the Code Par 42.
5. The Committee was pleased to be able to pay in full the proposed allocation of grants of £3,610,000 to Councils for 2017.
6. The Committee has appealed to congregations, through presbyteries, to remit the Appeal donations as they are received. The Committee has to report that 59% of 2017 donations (2016: 59%) were received by the Financial Secretary's Department in December 2017 and January 2018. Congregations should be aware that the United Appeal is distributed to the Mission Councils on a regular basis, spread throughout the year. In order for the Committee to meet its obligation to fund the running of the Mission Councils and prevent them from going into overdraft, a substantial United Appeal cash-flow reserve has to be maintained. A lesser reserve would be necessary if Congregations did not hold on to United Appeal donations until the year end. The Committee again appeals to congregational committees to please remit United Appeal donations as they receive them.
7. A number of years ago the United Appeal Board took the decision to introduce a phased reduction in the use of reserves but this was deferred pending the restructuring of Boards to Councils. Reserves have reduced by around £1m in the last 10 years. In 2017 reserves would have been reduced by £102,128, which was slightly less than the budgeted release of £112,600, but this was offset by the return of £150,000 by the Council of Congregational Life and Witness as referred to above. The Committee realises it will not be possible to continue to use reserves at this rate or to depend on Councils returning grants previously allocated and therefore remains of the view that the level of the Appeal and grants to Councils needs to be brought into line over the next few years.

Promotions

8. The Promotions Panel has carried out a survey of minsters to gauge the awareness of various aspect of the Appeal and this has highlighted several issues which need to be addressed. In particular, the Panel has been discussing the merits of a re-launch of the Appeal. Provisional

costings were in the region of £6,000 to £7,000 for the preparation and production of suitable material. The Committee agreed to reflect on the responses to the survey and whether some professional advice should be sought as to how best to promote the Appeal and whether a re-launch, including a change of Appeal name, is necessary.

9. The Committee expresses its thanks to the Creative Production Department for its help in producing promotional material.

The 2018 Appeal

10. The General Assembly has already agreed to an Appeal of £3,500,000 for 2018 and this is outlined in Schedules I and II of this report.
11. The Council for Congregational Life and Witness has budgeted to return a further £90,000 of previously allocated grants in 2018.

The 2019 Appeal

12. The United Appeal Committee met on two occasions, once to complete some preparatory work and once to meet with the Councils and consider the 2019 budget requests submitted. Having given careful consideration to the budget requests and each Council's presentation, the United Appeal Committee drew up the allocations outlined in Schedule IV which were agreed by the General Council for submission to the General Assembly.
13. The Appeal is to be allocated to presbyteries on the basis of 50% contributing families and 50% assessable income and for 2019 this is outlined in Schedule III. The Committee is aware that while the Appeal increase in recent years has been of an inflationary amount, the impact on presbyteries and congregations (if presbyteries use the same method of allocation) means that a presbytery/congregation allocation can vary from the previous year not only by the increase in the Appeal but also by the movement in its assessable income and contributing families in relation to other presbyteries/congregations. As noted in last year's report the Committee has reviewed the basis of allocation of the Appeal Target to presbyteries. At present the Appeal is allocated to presbyteries on the basis of 50% contributing families and 50% assessable income. The Appeal for 2018 (of £3,500,000) shows an increase over the Appeal for 2017 (of £3,460,000) of 1.16%. However, at a presbytery level (or congregational level if they use the same method) the increase or decrease will depend not only on the overall increase in the Appeal but also on how the number of contributing families or amount of assessable income has changed in comparison to other presbyteries or congregations i.e. not every presbytery or congregational allocation will increase by 1.16%. The Committee have examined four alternative methods ((i) 75% contributing families and 25% assessable income, (ii) 25% contributing families and 75% assessable income, (iii) 100% contributing families and 0% assessable income, (iv) 0% contributing families and 100% assessable income) but all these methods tend to exacerbate the increases/decreases over the previous

year. Therefore, the Committee is not, at this stage, recommending any change to the current method of allocation. The Committee intends to keep the matter under review.

14. Grants to Councils will continue be allocated on the basis of 7.5% each month with 10% withheld pending the response to the Appeal.
15. As reported last year the Committee is aiming to bring the level of grants awarded into line with the Appeal and reduce the use of reserves over the next few years. In doing so the Committee will have regard to the amounts returned by the Council for Congregational Life and Witness which should, in the short term, help to ease any impact on Council grants.
16. The Committee would thank the Financial Secretary's Department for their assistance in every area of the United Appeal's work.
17. The Committee is committed to the need for a United Appeal Sunday, and a suitable resolution is appended. The first Sunday in March is recommended as United Appeal for Mission Sunday. This date is chosen as it is close to the February presbytery meetings when the Spring 'Mission Together' leaflets are distributed.

MARTIN HAMPTON, Acting Convener

UNITED APPEAL COMMITTEE**SCHEDULE I**

Presbytery	Contributing Families 2016	Assessable Income 2016 £	United Appeal 2018 £
Ards	6,770	3,596,194	322,848
Armagh	3,559	2,148,429	181,298
Ballymena	6,897	3,517,370	322,337
Belfast North	4,110	2,148,167	194,425
Belfast South	2,670	1,819,601	145,341
Belfast East	4,880	3,383,452	268,231
Carrickfergus	4,370	1,954,699	191,941
Coleraine and Limavady	5,040	2,622,172	237,876
Derry and Donegal	4,708	2,074,805	205,390
Down	4,207	1,857,065	183,672
Dromore	4,413	2,247,262	206,098
Dublin and Munster	1,086	1,556,759	95,772
Iveagh	3,331	1,633,305	152,740
Monaghan	1,066	687,679	56,286
Newry	2,674	1,271,119	120,817
Omagh	3,253	1,539,345	146,663
Route	3,254	1,484,969	144,246
Templepatrick	3,692	1,714,431	164,989
Tyrone	3,411	1,730,944	159,030
	73,391	38,987,767	3,500,000

50% of the allocation for 2018 has been based on contributing families and 50% on Assessable Income. Assessable Income for Congregations in the Republic of Ireland has been converted to sterling at GBP£1 = €1.2248.

UNITED APPEAL COMMITTEE**SCHEDULE II**

	2018
	£
MISSION IN IRELAND	1,050,000
GLOBAL MISSION	1,050,000
TRAINING IN MINISTRY	370,000
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS	720,000
SOCIAL WITNESS	245,000
CREATIVE PRODUCTION	230,000
	<hr/>
	3,665,000
Income from donations etc.	-38,000
Release from reserves	-127,000
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Appeal to Congregations	<u>3,500,000</u>

UNITED APPEAL COMMITTEE**SCHEDULE III**

Presbytery	Contributing Families 2017	Assessable Income 2017 £	United Appeal 2019 £
Ards	6,720	3,723,121	329,554
Armagh	3,511	2,201,318	183,432
Ballymena	6,550	3,638,544	321,639
Belfast North	3,919	2,166,338	191,975
Belfast South	2,546	1,859,801	144,591
Belfast East	4,807	3,346,276	265,741
Carrickfergus	4,279	2,046,113	195,588
Coleraine and Limavady	4,958	2,733,297	242,546
Derry and Donegal	4,654	2,214,626	212,253
Down	4,077	1,924,649	185,262
Dromore	4,345	2,297,298	208,251
Dublin and Munster	1,160	1,804,701	107,930
Iveagh	3,265	1,721,101	156,261
Monaghan	1,082	813,503	62,464
Newry	2,715	1,325,342	125,290
Omagh	3,248	1,615,176	151,188
Route	3,210	1,557,070	147,697
Templepatrick	3,457	1,704,031	160,255
Tyrone	3,346	1,717,022	158,083
	71,849	40,409,327	3,550,000

50% of the allocation for 2019 has been based on contributing families and 50% on Assessable Income. Assessable Income for Congregations in the Republic of Ireland has been converted to sterling at GBP£1 = €1.1413

UNITED APPEAL COMMITTEE**SCHEDULE IV**

	2019
	£
MISSION IN IRELAND	1,065,000
GLOBAL MISSION	1,065,000
TRAINING IN MINISTRY	375,000
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS	720,000
SOCIAL WITNESS	245,000
CREATIVE PRODUCTION	230,000
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	3,700,000
Income from donations etc.	-38,000
Release from reserves	-112,000
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Appeal to Congregations	<u>3,550,000</u>

GUYSMERE CENTRE TASK GROUP

1. The 2017 General Assembly instructed the Task Group to “further investigate economically viable options for retaining the Guysmere site, consulting with the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady (and any other parties the Task Group deems appropriate)....” and then to “..... report to the 2018 General Assembly to enable a decision to be made regarding the sale, or otherwise, of the site.” (2017 General Assembly Minutes, page 63).
2. During the last year the Task Group met on four occasions, seeking to fulfil this remit. It requested papers from a number of groups and individuals, chief among these being the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady, but also including an informal group of individuals operating under the name ‘The Friends of Guysmere’. The Task Group took a full day in October 2017 to meet with interested parties which included representatives of both the Presbytery and the Friends, along with some other individuals.
3. While these meetings produced a number of interesting suggestions, the Task Group’s unanimous view was that they did not deliver any realistic and viable proposals as to how the Guysmere Centre could remain within the ownership and under the control of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Such a proposal would have had to provide, firstly, a feasible means for funding the significant and essential work of upgrading the Centre. Secondly, it would have to provide a sustainable financial model for its operation going into the future and, finally, a realistic indication as to the week-round scale of ministry and mission achievable at the centre that would justify the significant capital, and possibly ongoing revenue, expenditure. These requirements were simply not present in the range of options presented to the Task Group and discussed with the individuals concerned.
4. After these discussions, the Task Group wrote to the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady indicating that it recognised “that it is not a stated priority of the denomination to finance the work of upgrading Guysmere or to cover any ongoing annual deficit in running the centre”. The letter continued, “The Task Group would therefore ask the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady to consider if it is prepared to take on the task of both financing the necessary up-grading of the Guysmere Centre and of underwriting its ongoing running costs”. The Task Group pointed presbytery to a number of other interested parties it might have wished to consult, but stated “...however, the key question is whether the Presbytery is willing to take on and underwrite this commitment”. The Task Group received in return a letter which did not give the requested commitment from the presbytery, but rather posed a number of further questions. The Task Group unanimously feel that further discussions would not arrive at a position where the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady would be in a position to take on the task of both financing the necessary up-grading of the Guysmere Centre and of underwriting its ongoing running costs. Indeed the Task

Group feels it would be unfair to ask a presbytery to take on this commitment as it is not a primary role of a presbytery.

5. Following these consultations, and taking all things in the round, it remains the clear and unanimous position of the Task Group, as previously reported both in 2017 and earlier, that redeveloping the Guysmere site as a residential facility for the denomination is not a viable option.
 - (a) The Task Group notes that the demand for a denominational Youth Centre or Conference Centre had previously been surveyed and it was the clear outcome that, while residential ministry of different types remained important, the denomination did not need its own centre. This position remains unchanged.
 - (b) The Task Group notes that in 2012-13 professionals were consulted and asked to provide costs for a re-developed Guysmere. It was reported at that time that costs for a renewed building would be a minimum of approx. £700,000 plus professional fees, plus vat – well in excess of £1million. These costs will have risen some five years later.
 - (c) The Task Group notes that the centre when operational had for many years been subsidised from central funds (on 31st December 2017 the accrued debt was £165,035 – a rise from £154,336 on 31st December 2016) and that any redeveloped centre was unlikely to be economically viable. A continued subsidy from central (United Appeal) funds would almost certainly be required, as mid-week use of the centre would be very limited during most of the year. This position has not changed for the better during the past year.
 - (d) The Task Group notes that in the past doubts were expressed regarding the willingness of PCI's congregations to underwrite these costs through further assessments (for the capital development) or through the United Appeal for an annual subsidy. It was concluded then that a re-development would not be good stewardship, given that little interest had been shown in the denomination for running a residential centre, with none of the General Assembly's Councils expressing a commitment to, or indeed sufficient interest in, using a redeveloped Guysmere Centre. The Task Group continues to concur with this conclusion.
6. As reported to the 2017 General Assembly, there was a desire within the Task Group, if at all possible, to retain the Guysmere site for ministry and/or mission within PCI. Approaches therefore were made (during 2015-17) to the Council for Social Witness (CSW) to see if that Council would be interested or able to develop the site for supported living or some other form of social witness. After detailed discussion, and exploration over an extended period of time of a variety of uses, including consultations with potential funders and partners, the CSW concluded that “the development would not be viable, in this current vacuum within funding streams”. This position remains unchanged.

7. As noted above, the Guysmere Centre has an accrued debt at 31st December 2017 of £165,035, which continues to rise as its present ‘moth-balling’ incurs a cost of some £10,000 per annum to keep the buildings secure, insured etc. Therefore, in light of the above, the Task Group reaffirms its previous recommendation, that to keep the ‘spirit of Guysmere’ alive the site should be sold and (after all debts and costs are met) a fund established, under the control of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, to support ministry, mission and outreach, with particular emphasis on residential ministry among young people. Resolutions are appended to this effect.

IVAN J PATTERSON, Convener

PRIORITIES COMMITTEE

1. The Priorities Committee met once during the year and noted that the 2017 General Assembly had approved the new priorities which the Committee had drawn up during 2016-17. The Committee discussed potential overlaps in remits between two or more Councils. It was noted that this does not involve areas of relating directly to congregations through the provision of resources, training, conferences etc – all of this now normally falling within the remit of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness. It was also noted that some Councils have the remit to develop thinking/policy in certain areas to assist the General Assembly to state PCI’s position on these matters, both for the benefit of the Church and of society as a whole. Finally, it was noted that discussions between both staff and conveners was essential to enable any potential overlaps to be discussed and ways forward identified. The General Council Convener and Secretary are available to facilitate such discussions, if that is required.

THE PRIORITIES REFERENCE PANEL

1. The Panel Convener, Mr Martin Hampton, outlined, for information purposes, the proposed process for Councils reporting on both the delivery of the remit given to them by the General Assembly and of the priorities set by the General Assembly (see Code Par 272(6)(c)). The related paper-work was provided, explained and discussed. It was noted that the Code requires the Priorities Reference Panel to report directly to General Council on these matters.
2. The Panel Convener also reminded the Committee of the process for the approval of new projects, staffing posts and major expenditure. Following discussion some additional points of clarification were agreed for addition into the requisite forms and guidelines.

TREVOR D GRIBBEN, Convener

MEMORIAL RECORD 2018

The Rev Robert Alexander Campbell, BA, MDiv, Minister of Clogher and Glenhoy, died, suddenly, on 5th June 2017, in the forty-seventh year of his age and the twelfth year of his ministry. He was born at Strabane on 26th November 1970, the only son, and second, of four children, to Robert (Bertie) Campbell, a farmer, and his wife, Jean, née Hamilton. The family belonged to the congregation of Corrick and Mr Campbell was educated at Corrick Primary School, 1975-1982, and Omagh High School, 1982 to 1987, where he received the McDowell Cup for the boy who achieved the best 'O' level results. He then attended Loughry College, Cookstown, 1987 to 1990, graduating with a BTEC National Diploma in Science (Technology of Food). This was followed by periods of work at Fivemiletown Creamery, Uniport Ltd., Leckpatrick Dairies, Regal Food Processors and Leckpatrick Foods until September 1993. From 1992 to 1994 he undertook part-time study in two modules, Philosophy and Literary Studies and Social Studies, through the Queen's University, Belfast. From September 1993 to June 1994 he was one of a team of Youth Board volunteers working with young people in various congregations, followed by full-time study at the University of Ulster, Coleraine campus, graduating in 1997 with an honours degree in Modern and Contemporary History. In the summer of 1996 he had worked as a camp counsellor at Camp Overlook, West Virginia, and there met Tonya Le Fever whom he married in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, on 29th November 1997. They settled to life there, Mr Campbell working as a laboratory technician and Mrs Campbell as a science teacher. Tragedy struck in May of the following year when Mrs Campbell sustained a brain injury as the result of a car accident. However, in 1999 Mr Campbell was able to begin studying theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, Pennsylvania, as they had earlier planned, and from which he graduated MDiv. They moved to Northern Ireland in 2003 and Mr Campbell completed his studies at the Union Theological College, Belfast, in 2004. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane on 3rd December 2004 and assigned as Assistant to the congregation of Terrace Row, Coleraine. Two years later, he was called to the joint charge of Clogher and Glenhoy and ordained there by the Presbytery of Omagh on 30th March 2006. Mr and Mrs Campbell, with their son Gershom, settled to ministry in this rural setting, and, in 2006, Joanna was born. Mr Campbell was widely respected for his hard work within his congregations and also in the wider community. He was a member of the Board of Governors of Fivemiletown College and served as Chairman. We give thanks to God for his witness to the saving and sustaining power of the Lord Jesus Christ in his personal life and public ministry, and we extend our sympathy and assurance of our prayers to his wife, Tonya, children, Gershom and Joanna, Mr Campbell's parents, sisters, Hazel, Gillian and Hilary, and wider family circle.

The Rev John Knox Ferguson Watson, BA, Minister Emeritus (Released), Ballygrainey, died on 9th June 2017, in the eighty-seventh year of his age and the sixtieth year of his ministry. He was born at Donaghadee on 6th February 1931, the youngest son of the Rev David Watson, Minister of First Donaghadee Presbyterian Church, and his wife, Mary Jane Knox Watson, née Ferguson. His siblings, David Henry Alexander and William James (W.J.) also became Presbyterian ministers. He was educated at Bangor Collegiate School and Regent House Grammar School, Newtownards. He played rugby for the 1st XV and also for Donaghadee. He was accepted as a student for the ordained ministry by the General Assembly in 1950 and he studied at Magee University College, Londonderry, graduating BA from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1954. He took his theology course at the Assembly's College, Belfast, and was licensed by the Presbytery of Ards on 8th July 1956. He assisted in the congregation of Westbourne, working alongside the Minister, the Rev John Henry Carson, and, also, in McQuiston Memorial, with the Minister, the Rev Samuel Eaton, both in east Belfast. In 1958, he was called by the congregation of Tullylish, near Banbridge, and was ordained there on 27th May by the Presbytery of Iveagh. Also, in that year, he married Hazel Patricia Glenn, at Ballygilbert Presbyterian Church, on 24th June 1958. Mrs Watson pre-deceased him on 22nd December 2012. They had two daughters, Kathryn and Joanne. During his ministry at Tullylish, extensive improvements were made to the Church property. The car park was extended, the church hall was renovated and a new kitchen installed. The meeting-house was re-roofed, the interior redecorated, new lighting installed, and a Minister's room added. In the wider community, he served on the Management Committee of Lurgan Girls' School and also served as chairman of Fortescue Primary School. Mr Watson was much appreciated as a pastor and preacher, and it was with regret that his people learned of his call to Ballygrainey, near Bangor, Co Down, to which he moved in 1971, and where he was installed by the Presbytery of Ards on 18th November. He had a sense of home-coming, for his great, great grandfather had been a foundation member of the congregation. He remained there for twenty-six years until his retirement on 31st May 1997. His organisational skills were again called on as he oversaw the building of the Minor Hall, a new kitchen, renovation in the Meeting-House, and the installation of a new organ and central heating system, all of which was paid for by a variety of fund-raising events supplementing the direct giving of the congregation. He faithfully pastored his people, visiting the families regularly, sharing with them the joys and the sorrows of their lives, ministering to them the hope and comfort of the Gospel, and leading them in the worship of God Sunday by Sunday. His evident interest in, and encouragement of, the youth of the congregation, was seen in his strong support and involvement with the Girls' Brigade, the Boys' Brigade, acting as Chaplain to both, and the Youth Club and the Sunday School. He also served as chairman of the Cotton Primary School, bringing him into contact with many more in the surrounding

community. He was involved in the wider work of the Church as a member of the Board of Publications and Aids to Worship. Mr Watson was greatly gifted with his hands, being skilled in woodwork, DIY, and clock repairing, in which he took great pleasure in his leisure hours. He was also an enthusiastic beekeeper, and was frequently called upon to deal with errant swarms, even on the Sabbath! We share with Mr Watson's daughters, Kathryn and Joanne, and the wider family circle, in giving thanks to God for his long life and committed ministry, and assure them of our sympathy and prayers.

The Rev Kenneth Smyth, BA, Minister Emeritus (Released), Drumbo, died on 18th July 2017, in the ninety-second year of his age, and the sixty-sixth year of his ministry. He was born at Fintona, on 20th July 1925, the third of five children, four boys and a girl, to Thomas Smyth, an officer with the Royal Irish Constabulary, and, later, a Sergeant with the Royal Ulster Constabulary, and his wife, Anna, née Simpson. The family moved to live in north Belfast and joined the large and busy congregation of St. Enoch's, Carlisle Circus. There, Mr Smyth received his Christian education and committed his life to Christ as a youth. He attended Drumglass Primary School, Dungannon, and the Belfast Royal Academy. He proved to be a valuable member of the Rugby 1st XV and, later, became a member of Malone Rugby Club, maintaining a keen interest in the game throughout his life. In the autumn of 1945 he proceeded to Magee University College, Londonderry, to study for the ordained ministry, and graduated BA from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1948. He completed his theological studies at the Assembly's College, Belfast, and was licensed, on 26th May 1950, by the Presbytery of Belfast. He served as Assistant to the Rev Kyle Alexander and to his successor, the Rev George Wynne, in the congregation of Seaview, Shore Road, Belfast. Nineteen fifty-two was a notable year for him. He was ordained and installed in the joint charge of Burt and Bunrana by the Presbytery of Derry, on 17th January 1952, and on 11th September, he married Susan Freda Boucher, a member of Belmont congregation, Belfast, where she was actively involved in the life of the church as a Sunday School teacher, leader of the Girl's Auxiliary and organising the Brownies. She quickly adapted to life as a minister's wife and fully supported Mr Smyth in his church work with her warm personality and gift of hospitality. On 14th May 1987 she was installed as Central President of the Presbyterian Woman's Association for a period of two years. After three years in County Donegal, Mr Smyth was called to Glastry where he was installed on 30th June 1955, by the Presbytery of Ards. He ministered there until he was called by the congregation of Drumbo, and installed by the Presbytery of Dromore, on 5th September 1963, where he was to remain for the next twenty-nine years. Mr Smyth was an outstanding example of a dedicated pastoral minister. A big man, physically, he had a big heart and a great love for people. He enjoyed nothing more than to be among people, sharing in their varied experiences of life, and was assiduous in caring for the

sick, the grieving and the dying, and was available to them twenty-four/seven. His warm personality and evident humanity, combined with a ready sense of humour, commended him to young and old, and to people of all creeds and from all walks of life. He was attentive to his pulpit ministry bringing the claims of Christ and the appeal of the Gospel to his hearers Sunday by Sunday. Extensive renovations were made to all the church property during his ministry to accommodate the expanding work and witness at Drumbo. Mr Smyth was a member of, the Council of the Presbyterian Historical Society Ireland for many years, and the Widows and Orphans of Ministers Fund, and acted as Convener of the Shankill Road Mission Committee, 1991 to 1998. He was a well-known figure in the wider community, not least through his membership of the loyal orders. During the nineteen-seventies he served in the RUC Reserve as a demonstration of his commitment to the security of the wider community. Mr Smyth retired on 31st October 1992. He was pre-deceased by his wife, Freda, on 6th May 2008. To their sons, Brian, Michael and Timothy, their wives, Hilary, Joyce and Margaret, and the wider family circle, we extend our sincere sympathy, as, with them, we give thanks for every memory of their father and our brother.

The **Rev Eric Moses Borland, BA**, Minister Emeritus, Burnside, Portstewart, died on 19th August 2017, in the one hundred and first year of his age, and the seventy-sixth year of his ministry. He was born at Londonderry on 15th April 1917, the fourth child of five brothers and sisters, to Moses Borland, merchant, and his wife, Harriet Gertrude, née Cunningham. He was brought up in the congregation of Great James Street, near which the family lived. His father was a Sunday School teacher and a member of the choir. The combination of a Christian home, and the influence of Mr T.S. Mooney, an elder in Great James Street, and founder of the Londonderry branch of the Crusaders, a national Bible class movement for teenagers, led Mr Borland to make a personal commitment of faith in Christ at the age of fourteen. He attended Londonderry Model School, 1922 to 1928, and Foyle College, 1928 to 1934. He pursued further academic study at Magee University College, Londonderry, and graduated BA from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1938. Obeying the call of God to the Christian ministry he entered the Assembly's College, Belfast, in the autumn of 1938, to study theology. On completion of his studies, he was licensed by the Presbytery of Derry on 2nd June 1940, and served as Assistant to the Rev John Henry Carson in Westbourne, Belfast. WWII was in progress and the Luftwaffe bombed the city in April 1941. The people of the Newtownards Road evacuated to the hills during the night, but Mr Borland camped out in the church building in case it caught fire. The church hall was hit and destroyed, but the meeting-house survived, as did he. Each day he toured the mortuaries to check if any of the congregation had been killed. At about that time he received a call to the congregation of Downpatrick where he was ordained by the

Presbytery of Down on 1st May 1941. Five years later, he was called to Hamilton Road, Bangor, and installed there on 28th March, 1946. His pastoral and organisational gifts were utilised to the full in this busy and growing congregation, which he served faithfully for nine years until he moved to Rosemary, north Belfast, and was installed there on 5th May 1955. A long ministry of twenty-three years ensued. The 'Troubles' broke out in 1969 effecting change in the demography of the area and presenting significant pastoral and leadership challenges to Mr Borland and many other community figures. He formed a warm friendship with the local Parish Priest on the Somerton Road, working together to encourage understanding and restraint in a divided neighbourhood. His role as Clerk of the Presbytery of North Belfast, 1972-1973, added to the expectations of his colleagues and of the wider Church for wise guidance and leadership. Mr Borland rose to the challenge and proved a discerning friend to his people and to his colleagues. His last five years of full-time ministry were spent in Portstewart where he was installed in the church extension charge of Burnside on 5th April 1978, by the Presbytery of Coleraine. The congregation had been meeting in Burnside Orange Hall since 1976, but moved to its own site and building, under Mr Borland's leadership, on 31st March 1979. When Mr Borland retired five years later, on 19th January 1983, he left behind a stable and growing congregation. Mr Borland was involved in a variety of ministries outwith his congregational responsibilities. He served the central church on the Jewish Committee, the Church Extension Consultative Committee, the Assembly Hall Committee, the Boards of Education and Mission, and as Moderator of the Synod of Belfast in 1969. As Secretary of the Presbyterian Widows and Orphans Society he gave much appreciated practical and pastoral help to the families of deceased colleagues in the ministry. In the wider community, he served as District Commissioner for Boy Scouts while in Downpatrick, 1943-1946, and in Bangor, 1946-1952. Also, while in Downpatrick, he served as Officiating Chaplain to the Army Barracks, at Ballykinlar, 1941-1945, and as Chaplain to Downpatrick Workhouse. He found time to write, publishing a pamphlet on the Mormons, 1965, a History of Hamilton Road Presbyterian, Bangor, 1897-1947, and a History of Rosemary to 1956. Reflecting on his ministry at his funeral service, the Rev Anne Tolland said, "Eric sacrificed his time and his gifts to reach out to those who were hurting and in need. He sacrificed his safety and comfort as he went into places that were difficult and unknown. Eric had known God's hand upon his life as a young boy and because he came as a 'living stone' (I Peter 2:4) God used him to bring comfort at some of the darkest times of our history in our province." Mr Borland married Muriel McDowell on 17th February, 1948, who was fully engaged with him in the life and work of the church, and who survives him. To Mrs Borland, their daughter, Lois, son-in-law, Nicholas, and wider family circle, we extend our sympathy, as we give thanks for the faith and service of a loyal servant of Christ.

The Rev Ivan James Wilson, MBE, MA, Ph.D., Minister Emeritus, Cumber and Upper Cumber, died on 3rd October 2017, in the eighty-fifth year of his age and the fifty-seventh year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 19th June 1932, only child of Joseph Herbert Wilson, a Textile Manager, and his wife, Florence Isobel, née Carson. Dr Wilson was brought up in connection with the congregation of Bethany, Shankill Road, Belfast. He was educated at the Royal Belfast Academical Institution. On leaving school he studied for an H.N.C qualification at the College of Technology, Belfast, which he completed in 1953. He achieved the Shipwright's Prize in 1949 and again in 1952. Responding to the call of God to the Christian ministry he attended Magee University College, Londonderry, and graduated BA from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1958. He followed this with the study of theology at the Assembly's College, Belfast. On the successful completion of his studies he was licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast on 31st May 1960. He was assigned to the Megain Memorial congregation, Belfast, to assist the Minister, the Rev Eric Vere Stewart. He was ordained there on 1st December 1960 by the Presbytery of Belfast, and continued, full-time, until 1963, when he was installed as Minister of First Kilrea on 4th April 1963 by the Presbytery of Coleraine. He continued to study and in 1964 gained his MA from Trinity College, Dublin. After four years he moved to Belfast, where he was installed as Minister of Nelson Memorial, Shankill Road, on 15th June 1967, by the Presbytery of South Belfast. Three years later he moved to the congregation of Lylehill, where he was installed on 11th June 1970 by the Presbytery of Templepatrick. There he remained until 1976, when he returned to First Kilrea, and was installed on 26th May, by the Presbytery of Coleraine, continuing to minister there until he moved to Scrabo Church Extension charge, Newtownards, and was inducted on 3rd January 1985 by the Presbytery of Ards. Dr Wilson moved to his final charge of Cumber and Upper Cumber in 1988 where he was installed by the Presbytery of Foyle on 24th March. In the wider Church he was Moderator of the Synod of Derry and Omagh, 1997, and Convener of the General Assembly's Church Architecture Committee, 1986-1993, where his early qualification and skills were used to advise congregations of changes to their property and new builds. Dr Wilson expanded his ministry through his chaplaincy work at the Belfast City Hospital. For many years he was a member of the Executive Committee of the Northern Ireland Hospital Chaplains Association. He became Secretary in 1976, and Director of Training in 1984. He was also the Irish Observer to the Joint Council of Hospital Chaplains in the UK. Dr Wilson combined this practical ministry with further academic study, and was awarded a doctorate in 1993, from Trinity College, Dublin, for a thesis on "The relative Theology of Hospital Chaplaincy". He was supported in his ministry by his wife, Carol Grace Wilson, née Douglas, whom he married on 19th September 1962. They had two children, Nigel (now deceased), and Julia. Dr Wilson retired from full-time ministry on 30th September 1998. In his leisure time he enjoyed photography and travel. We give thanks to God for his ministry, and

we extend our sympathy and prayers to Mrs Wilson, daughter Julia, her husband Graeme, and grandchildren Matthew and Jessica.

The Very Rev Howard Cromie, BA, BD, MA, DD, Minister Emeritus (Released), Railway Street, Lisburn, died on 6th October 2017, in the ninetieth year of his age and the sixty-fourth year of his ministry. He was born at Ballydown, Banbridge, on 19th April 1928, to Joseph Thomas Cromie, farmer, and his wife, Margaret, née Herron, the youngest child of a family of six, two daughters and four sons. The family were members of Scarva Street congregation, Banbridge. Dr Cromie was educated at the Abercorn Primary School and Banbridge Academy. The strong Christian ethos of home, and the teaching of his Church, bore fruit in personal faith in Jesus Christ in his early life. He was a member of the Student Christian Movement at the Academy, and he became a communicant member of his Church and a Sunday School teacher. During these teenage years he became conscious of a strong calling to the Christian ministry and, on leaving school, proceeded to the Magee University College, Londonderry, in 1946, graduating BA from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1950. In the autumn of that year, he went to New College, Edinburgh, returning to Belfast in 1951, to study at the Assembly's College. Class prizes through these years show him as a diligent and able student. On returning home he was licensed on 1st June 1952 by the Presbytery of Banbridge. He had already gained ministry experience as Student Assistant in Richmond Craigmillar Church of Scotland, Edinburgh, which prepared him for further ministry in Great Victoria Street, Belfast, where Rev James Rowland Boyd was Minister, (later to become Professor of Practical Training at the Assembly's College in 1963) and also in Saint Enoch's, Carlisle Circus, where the Rev Dr Austin Fulton was Minister. On completion of his assistantship years, he was called to the Scots Church, Enniskillen, where he was ordained by the Presbytery of Omagh on 21st July 1954. This was to be a noteworthy year for him, as the very next month, on 31st August, he married Elsie Kathleen Moore, daughter of the Rev William Moore of Scarva Street congregation, Banbridge, under whose ministry Dr Cromie was raised. Dr Cromie embarked upon a busy ministry in Enniskillen for the next eight years, attending to his pulpit duties and his pastoral care of his people. He became involved in the life of the wider community, serving on several school committees, acting as Chaplain to the recruits at the Training Depot of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), and the students at Portora Royal School. In addition, he served as Vice Chairman of the local Hospital Board and was President of the Enniskillen and Sligo District Christian Endeavour Union. Then, in late 1961, he was called by the congregation of Railway Street, Lisburn, and was installed there, on 10th January 1962, by the Presbytery of Dromore. Over the next two years he was involved closely with the refurbishment of the Lecture Hall and redesign of the front of the interior of the Church, to accommodate the choir, organ and communion table. A Service of Re-opening took

place on 5th May 1963 and the improvements were dedicated in memory of two former Ministers, Dr R K Eliot and Professor T H Robinson. Dr Cromie encouraged youth and children's work in the congregation, and a mid-week Bible Study, Young Women's Group, and an Indoor Bowling club, were formed. In the wider Church he was invited to conduct evangelistic missions. He served on the Boards and Committees of Assembly, being a member of the Irish Mission, Panel of Evangelists, the Continental Mission, the Library Committee of Assembly's College, the Presbyterian Historical Society, of which he was a Vice-President, and he was co-Convener of the Irish Mission, 1970-1978, and of Church Extension, 1978-1982. As Co-convener of Church Extension, he led by example, when, owing to population growth and expanding housing development, the congregations of St Columba's, and of Elmwood, Ballymacash, were formed out of Railway Street parish in 1969 and 1976, respectively. More widely, for 32 years he was Officiating Chaplain to the forces at Thiepval Barracks, and for 42 years he served as Chaplain to Thompson House, Lisburn. He found time to write three short books: *David Livingstone of Africa*, *Ulster Settlers in America*, *Why the Reformation?* and, in retirement, another, *Through Changing Scenes*, reflecting on his life and ministry in the 20th century. This devoted serviced was recognised by the Presbyterian Church when he was elected Moderator in 1984, and awarded a DD by the Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland. Throughout his long ministry Dr Cromie was constantly supported by his wife, Kathleen, who was especially closely involved with the life and work of the Young Women's Organisation and the PWA. Dr Cromie retired on 31st May 1993, though, like so many retired ministers, he continued to minister in various ways until ill health and infirmity set in. We give thanks to God for his witness to Christ and devotion to the Church, and we extend our sympathy and prayers to Mrs Cromie, to their children and their spouses, Alan and Mary, David and Anne, Gillian and Tim, Fiona and Harold, and to their wider family circle.

The **Rev Victor Whyte, BA**, Minister Emeritus, Macosquin, Coleraine, died on 29th November 2017, in the ninety-first year of his age and the fifty-third year of his ordination. He was born at Little Derry, Limavady, on 28th October 1927, one of ten children, six boys and four girls, to Joseph Whyte, a farmer, and his wife, Agnes Whyte, née Harbinson. He was raised in connection with the congregation of Balteagh, and was educated at Lislane, and Limavady, primary schools, and Limavady Grammar. Mr Whyte left school at the age of fourteen, and served his time to the drapery trade in Tweedy Acheson's shop in Limavady. In 1944, he was converted to personal faith in Christ, and obeyed a strong sense of call to full-time Christian work by training at the Faith Mission College, Edinburgh, for two years. This was followed by two years spent assisting John Moore, who was the Superintendent of the Tent Hall, Steel Street, Glasgow, run by the United Evangelical Association. On returning to Northern Ireland, he served for two years

with the Irish Evangelisation Society. Throughout this time a strong conviction grew that he should train for the ordained ministry of the Church of his upbringing. So, in preparation, he attended Renshaw's College, Belfast, and continued his studies at the Queen's University, Belfast, from which he graduated BA. While engaged in preaching in the district of Ballygowan, he met Muriel Elizabeth Gibson. Love blossomed and they were married at Ballygowan Presbyterian Church in 1955. They had two children, Derek and Sheena. On graduating from Queen's Mr Whyte studied theology at the Assembly's College, Belfast, and was licensed by the Presbytery of East Belfast on 9th June 1963. He served his assistantship in the congregation of Knock, Belfast, alongside the Minister, the Rev Robert Cummings Elliott. The following year, he was called by the congregation of Macosquin, and was ordained there by the Presbytery of Coleraine on 27th October 1964, where he served as a faithful pastor and friend to so many for his 28 years of tenure and beyond. Under God, and through his wise and energetic leadership, the church grew during these years with many coming to faith in Christ. In the pulpit he maintained his evangelist's heart and vision and preached the Gospel of His Saviour with both clarity and simplicity. As a pastoral visitor, Victor Whyte was without equal throughout Presbytery, renowned for his diligence and care to those within the congregation and to those he met throughout the wider community. Under his guidance as Chairman of the Church Committee, much work had been done to maintain, develop and enhance the suite of buildings and material resources of the Church, including the building of the original concourse area, the renovation of the sanctuary and installation of furnishings, and the building and resourcing of a new hall. Outside of congregational responsibilities he exercised a dedicated and fruitful ministry as Chaplain in the Coleraine Hospital, not only ministering to patients in their illness, but also befriending and encouraging staff at all levels. In all he did, he was renowned for his methodical and meticulous approach to detail, an energetic conscientiousness and dependability long into retirement, and a warm-hearted generosity of spirit and a genuine and prayerful interest in people's lives that endeared him to so many. Mr Whyte retired from his role as Minister of Macosquin on 31st December 1992, but he continued to have a fruitful ministry for many years, both as Pastoral Assistant for a time in New Row Congregation, and more widely through his preaching in many churches around Coleraine and beyond. To Mrs Whyte, son Derek and his wife Jill, daughter Sheena and her husband Alan, and the wider family circle, we offer our sympathy, and give thanks to God for the life and ministry of their loved one and our colleague.

The Rev Ernest Edward Hamilton Porter, BA, BD, Minister Emeritus (Released), First Broughshane, died on 26th January 2018, in the ninety-second year of his age and the sixty-fifth year of his ministry. He was born at Killynure, Mountjoy, Omagh, one of nine children,

(five girls and four boys) to David John Porter, farmer, and his wife, Violet Helena, née Christie. The family were members of Mountjoy Presbyterian Church where Ernest imbibed the Christian faith, reinforced by the Christian faith and love of his parental home. He was educated at Castletown Primary School, followed by Omagh Academy. Obeying a call to the Christian ministry he studied at Magee College University, Londonderry, and Trinity College, Dublin, from which he graduated BA in 1949. He proceeded to the Assembly's College, Belfast, and completed his theological training in 1951, the next year gaining a BD from the Queen's University, Belfast. He proved himself a good student with a particular interest and ability in Greek and Hebrew, which he later used to inform his pulpit ministry. During his final year at Assembly's College he gained practical experience of ministry assisting the Rev Thomas Carlisle, minister of Joymount congregation, Carrickfergus, and, on completion of his studies, became assistant to the Rev James Sheppard Woods, Ebrington, Londonderry. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Omagh on 27th May 1951. While a student at Magee Mr Porter met Irene Stewart, whom he married on 11th September 1951. In the following years Mr and Mrs Porter were blessed by the births of three children, Ross, Donna and Diane, and they enjoyed a close and secure family life. In 1953, he received a call from the congregation of Second Dromara in the County Down, where he was ordained and installed, on 25th March 1953, by the Presbytery of Dromore. After ten years of settled and fruitful ministry in Dromara, Mr Porter was installed in the congregation of First Broughshane on 14th August 1963, by the Presbytery of Ballymena. He was to enjoy a long ministry there of twenty-eight years. He was appreciated as a thoughtful preacher communicating the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ 'from the heart to the heart', and he published a selection of his fifty favourite sermons during his retirement years. He was assiduous in visiting his people and sharing with them in the joys and trials of life, ministering Christian hope and humanity in their need. His farming background gave him an affinity with the people of his two congregations and he kept up his knowledge and interest by keeping livestock and growing vegetables. Mr Porter played his part in the life of the wider community through involvement with local schools, and in the work of the courts and the mission of the Church. He served as Moderator of the Presbytery of Ballymena 1966-1967, and was elected Moderator of the Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine in 1987. Mr Porter retired on 30th September 1991. Throughout these busy years of full-time ministry, he was constantly supported by his wife, Irene, who took a particular interest in the work of the Presbyterian Woman's Association. Her loyalty was reciprocated, when, in later years of illness, Mr Porter took care of her until her death in April 2014. We give thanks for the life and ministry of our brother who modelled what he preached, that every Christian should be proactive in dedicating their gifts and talents to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. To Mr Porter's son and daughters, and wider family circle, we express our sympathy and assurance of our prayers.

The Rev Robert (Robin) Archibald Boyd, BA, Minister Emeritus (Released), Second Ballyeaston, died on 7th February 2018, in the ninety-fifth year of his age, and the sixty-fourth year of his ministry. He was born at Londonderry on 3rd May 1922, the elder of two sons, to William E Boyd, an Office Manager, and his wife, Mary, née, Boyd. Mr Boyd was brought up in the congregation of Ebrington where he early learned to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. On leaving school, he intended to study for the ministry at Magee College, but this had to be postponed due to the sudden death of his father. For some years he worked at the American Air Base on the Limavady Road, and he set aside enough money to enable him eventually to pursue academic study at Magee College, and Trinity College, Dublin, from which he graduated BA in 1948. He proceeded to the Assembly's College, Belfast, to study theology, and was licensed by the Presbytery of Derry on 23rd July 1950. During his student years he assisted the Rev William John McGeagh, First Larne, and, on completion of his studies continued there full-time. In 1953 he was called to the united congregations of Fourtowns and Poyntzpass and was ordained at Fourtowns on 18th June by the Presbytery of Newry. He brought with him the pastoral experience of tending to the families of the passengers and crew who lost their lives on the ferry, the *Princess Victoria*, sailing from Stranraer to Larne, on 31st January 1953, but which sank in stormy weather five miles north of the Copeland Islands, County Down, with the loss of 133 lives. On 9th September 1955, he married Dorothy Jean Ross, an official with the County Antrim Education Committee, whom he met while living in Larne. They had two daughters, Margaret and Gillian. After thirteen years, Mr Boyd was called to the congregation of Second Ballyeaston where he was installed, on 17th February 1966, by the Presbytery of Templepatrick. Over the next twenty-two years Mr Boyd faithfully attended to the pastoral needs of his people and to his Sunday pulpit ministry. He encouraged the work of the Sunday School and of the Boys' Brigade, often acting as chef and hygiene officer at BB camps. He became involved in the life of the wider community, notably, in the Vintage Tractors Club, which grew out of a series of Country Fairs organised in the 1970s, and which still meets in the church halls. He developed a close relationship with the Minister of First Ballyeaston congregation, the Rev Dr Harold MacConnell, and together they encouraged their people in a neighbourly fellowship. For many years Mr Boyd served as Convener of the Templepatrick Presbytery's Finance Committee, also as Moderator of the Presbytery in 1969, and as Moderator of the Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine, in 1984. Throughout his life he enjoyed country pursuits, fishing, shooting, gun-smithing, which he early learned at the Archibald family home near the River Faughan, as well as singing, literature, and natural history. He contributed letters and articles on several of these interests to magazines. For over fifty years he served as President of the Rifle and Pistol Club. Mr Boyd retired on 30th September 1988. He suffered the loss of his wife, Dorothy, in 2004, and of their daughter, Gillian, in 2012, both of whom he cared for through long illness. To his daughter,

Margaret, and the wider family circle, we extend our sincere sympathy as we give thanks to God for the long life and ministry of the Rev Robin Boyd.

Rev **Samuel (Uel) Armstrong, BSc, BD**, Minister without Charge (Retired), died on 8th February 2018, in the seventy-second year of his age, and the fortieth year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast, the second of four children, to Thomas Armstrong, a storeman, and his wife, Ethel née, Wallace. He was brought up in the congregation of Shankill Road Mission and was educated at Cliftonville Primary School and the Boys' Model School, Belfast. He studied physics at the Queen's University, Belfast. He enjoyed sport and played football for Queen's and also Ballyclare and Crusaders clubs. His lively interest in the world about him took him to Ghana with VSO for a year, while a student, and later to the Holy Land. On leaving Queen's he worked as an engineer with Goodyear, Craigavon, and then at Enkalon, Antrim, where he and Lynne Hooks settled following their marriage on 11th March 1972. Responding to the call of God, he was accepted as a student for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and studied at the Assembly's College, Belfast, 1975-1978, graduating BD. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Templepatrick on 11th June 1978, and he assisted the Rev SEM Brown in Abbey, Monkstown, where he was ordained by the Presbytery of Carrickfergus on 11th January 1979. A year later, on 28th February, he was called and installed as Minister in Lissara by the Presbytery of Down. Mr Armstrong's friendly outgoing personality helped him to make quickly a mark for himself and his ministry among his people, whom he pastored with compassion and kindness. He encouraged the young people and nurtured their faith through the Youth Club and the Oasis Youth Fellowship, and he played an active part in the Presbytery Youth Movement. In addition to his pulpit and pastoral ministry, he led and oversaw an extensive renovation programme of the church property in 1985. He was also a well-known and respected figure throughout the community in Crossgar, intentionally cultivating relationships with various groups. He played with Kilmore Recreation Football Club, and successfully persuaded a number of the players to come to church. He built good relationships with the Roman Catholic community in the village and enjoyed a very strong and deep friendship with a number of the brothers from the Tobar Mhuire monastery just across the road from the manse. The Presbytery owes a debt to him for his work as Clerk from 1984 to 1993. Sadly, this dedicated and fruitful ministry was interrupted by the diagnosis of a brain tumour in 1992. He faced this unwelcome news with faith and courage. In the words of his son-in-law, the Rev Graeme Kennedy, Ballygrainey, speaking at his Thanksgiving Service, "Uel was insistent that he was ready to go... He had a Redeemer. He was looking forward, as Job was, to seeing that Redeemer with his own eyes." However, his home-call was not yet, for, after treatment, Mr Armstrong was able to return to work, until ill-health obliged him

to resign his ministry in 2004. We give thanks to Almighty God for the life and ministry of our brother Uel, and assure Mrs Armstrong, their children, Ruth, Paula and Alison, his sisters Isobel and Sandra, brother, Tom, and the wider family circle, of our sympathy and prayers in their loss.

The Rev William (Billy) Caughey, BA, Minister Emeritus (Released), Kircubbin and Portaferry, died on 11th March 2018, in the ninety-first year of his age, and the sixtieth year of his ministry. He was born at Newtownards, on 18th February 1928, the younger of two sons, to William Caughey, Manager of a Boot and Shoe Firm, and his wife, Grace, née Wilson. His family were actively involved in the congregation of Streatan, where his father was the Clerk of Session, and where, in later years, his brother served as Organist and Choirmaster. He was educated at Model Primary School, followed by Regent House Grammar School, Newtownards. As a teenager he was converted to personal faith in Christ through a Boys' Brigade mission. On leaving school he worked as a Pharmaceutical Chemist but, responding to the call of God to the ordained ministry, he studied at Magee University College, Londonderry, and Trinity College, Dublin, 1949 to 1954, graduating BA. He pursued theological study at New College, Edinburgh, 1955 to 1956, where he was strongly influenced by Professor James S Stewart, and then the Assembly's College, Belfast, 1956 to 1957. As a student, he assisted the Rev John Young, Belmont congregation, Belfast, and, then the Rev David Porter, Richview, Belfast, where he continued full-time following his licensing by the Presbytery of Comber, on 16th June 1957. He was called to the congregation of St Johnston, County Donegal, where he was ordained and installed by the Presbytery of Raphoe, on 27th March 1958. On 24th September of the same year he married Eileen Elizabeth (Beth) Robinson. After a short ministry, he moved to Ramoan, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Route on 28th June 1961. He was fully engaged in the work of the congregation and paid particular attention to the young people's work, Boys Brigade, Girls Auxiliary, and the Presbytery Youth Movement. During his ministry the congregation built a new hall and Mr Caughey arranged an evangelistic mission, conducted by the Rev Harold Graham. He served as Moderator of Presbytery in 1964, and he was involved in the healing ministry. In the local community, he became Chairman of the Management Committee of Moyarget Primary School. After a ministry of seventeen years in Ramoan, Mr Caughey was installed in First Boardmills, Second Boardmills and Killaney, on 5th September 1978, by the Presbytery of Down, where he served for six years until he moved back to County Donegal, to be installed in Dunfanaghy and Carrigart by the Presbytery of Donegal on 13th September 1984. He made one final move to Kircubbin and Portaferry, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Ards, on 5th November 1987. In all these spheres of service Mr Caughey earnestly preached the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and faithfully pastored

his people with diligence and humanity. He loved the Word of God and the God of the Word, and he made himself proficient in the biblical languages of Hebrew and Greek. It has been said of him, “His delight is in the law of the Lord...” (Psalm 1) Throughout his years he was loyally supported by his wife, Beth, who complemented his ministry with her own commitment and involvement. Mr Caughey retired on 31st March 1993, and, like so many active retired ministers, continued to supply pulpits for some years, but had more leisure time to enjoy his family and his hobbies, painting and music. In giving thanks to God for Mr Caughey’s ministry, we assure his wife, Beth, and his daughters, Christine, Caroline and Alison, of our sympathy and prayers, and commend them to the comforts of the Gospel which sustained their loved one to the end.

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 2

Wednesday – 3.30pm

MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. The Moderator's Advisory Committee met on three occasions throughout the year to transact a significant variety of business. Throughout the year a number of Moderator's Advisory Assessors were appointed to assist presbyteries in their work.
2. The Committee received a letter from the Dialogue and Resources Task Group. This concerned the matter of advice for kirk sessions where someone in a same-sex marriage wishes to be received onto the Communion Roll on presentation of a Disjunction Certificate or on profession of faith – which matter had been raised on the floor of the Assembly. It also referred to questions from the Task Group concerning gender reassignment and the Christian faith. It asked the Committee to consider how best to form a response which will be pastorally helpful. Following discussion, both in the meeting and subsequently, it was agreed to refer the issue concerning same-sex marriage and reception onto a Communion Roll etc to the Doctrine Committee. It was further agreed that the Clerk should consult and bring names to the Council for a Task Group to look at issues concerning human identity, the Task Group to include people with medical and teaching and/or youth-work backgrounds.

Charity Trustee requirements for members of Presbytery

3. Two issues were dealt with relating to Charity Trustee requirements for members of Presbytery:
 - (a) Regarding Army and other Service Chaplains and Global Mission Workers, who by nature of their sphere of service were usually unable to attend presbytery meetings, it was agreed: *that the General Assembly Solicitor be asked to prepare Overtures to allow ministers in these positions to continue to be full members of presbytery, but not charity trustees.*
 - (b) Regarding minimum acceptable attendance by ministers at presbytery, it was agreed that the Clerk advise that retired ministers ought to attend Presbytery at least once a year to retain membership; and that he also advise that presbyteries have a responsibility to deal with active ministers who do not attend under existing rules of discipline in respect to ordination and installation vows.

Ministers and ‘public appointments’

4. The Committee considered the matter of Ministers and ‘public appointments’ (Code Par 73(d)).

The particular point at issue is that the Linkage Commission requires the reporting to it of only those paid public appointments which are over 6 hours per week. The Code however, requires the presbytery to ensure that a minister does not undertake any paid public appointment without the consent of the presbytery and the Linkage Commission. While the Linkage Commission in a sense gives automatic consent for an appointment that involves 6 hours or fewer per week, there is still a requirement for presbytery to consent. It was agreed that the Clerk, through the Linkage Commission, should draw the attention of the Church to the need for presbytery consent for any paid public appointment, no matter what the hours involved.

Minister Emeritus status for those resigning their charge

5. The Clerk tabled a paper on this matter (see Appendix 1). He noted recent examples of where ministers in their sixties had resigned for health reasons and whose Presbyteries are likely to propose that the coming General Assembly grant Minister Emeritus status for them. This is likely to be straightforward. There are, however, particular questions to be resolved over whether any younger minister who has to resign their charge for health reasons should be able to become a Minister Emeritus, and concerning situations where a minister resigns due to a breakdown of relationships with the congregation. Following detailed discussion the Committee agreed to recommend the following to the General Council:

That normally a proposal to grant Minister Emeritus status under Code Par 226(a) will only be considered at the General Assembly that takes place after the minister concerned reaches the age of 60.

This recommendation was subsequently approved by the General Council at its meeting in March 2018.

6. Two presbyteries have subsequently submitted separate requests to have a minister enrolled as Minister Emeritus under these guidelines. In each case the Committee is supportive of the request and appropriate resolutions are appended.
7. On a related matter, the Clerk and Deputy Clerk agreed to give consideration as to how the Code (in particular relating to Par 226(a)) could be altered to allow for a minister near to retirement who is loosed from his/her charge, where there is no fault (e.g. under Code Par 318(3) (c)), to be made Minister Emeritus.

Ministers without Charge serving as a Clerk of Presbytery

8. The Clerk tabled a paper on this matter of a Presbytery desiring a minister to remain as a Presbytery Clerk after being released from their charge (see Appendix 2). He noted that he was aware that a

presbytery may wish to have its clerk continue in post subsequent to his resignation from his charge on health grounds, as medical opinion indicated that he would be able to fulfil the duties of Presbytery Clerk. Following discussion, the contents of the paper noted with approval by the Committee.

9. Subsequent to this decision, the Presbytery of Tyrone submitted a Memorial for consideration of the General Assembly relating to their current clerk, the Rev Tom Conway (see page 158). The Committee, having considered the prayer of the Memorial, would be supportive.

Charity Trustees

10. The Clerk noted that the law of the church is not always being fulfilled in regard to updating kirk session membership. While new members of kirk session sign the necessary Declaration, in some cases their membership is not being transmitted to the Charity Commissioner through its website. Further, in some cases when an elder comes off the kirk session, for example, through retirement or death, this is not always transmitted to the Charity Commission. The Clerk also noted that it has been reported to him by some Clerks of Presbytery that some congregational ministers do not attend presbytery. He observed that attendance at presbytery is an obligation that is placed on ministers in the vows they take at their ordination and/or installation by that presbytery. He asked for advice.
11. Following discussion on both of these matters, it was agreed:
 - (a) That the Clerk write to Presbytery Clerks reminding them of the need for kirk sessions to report to the Charity Commission all changes in membership very soon after they take place.
 - (b) That it may be appropriate to include an item in connection with changes in kirk session membership in the annual return of presbyteries to the Clerk's office so that Clerks of Presbytery have a reminder that this information needs to be kept current.
 - (c) That it be recommended to the General Council that Clerks be required to present annually to their presbytery a record of the attendance of the full roll of members, for inclusion in the minutes. This recommendation was subsequently approved by the General Council.

Calls to Part-Time Ministry Charges

12. The Clerk outlined the current position regarding calls to part-time ministry. In the Linkage Commission Guidelines (reported to the 2016 General Assembly and noted) it states:

“Once a charge has been given leave to call for Part-Time Ministry, any qualified ordained Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, who has not retired from the ministry, shall be eligible to apply for such a Part-Time charge (although in exceptional circumstances a Licentiate

may be declared eligible by the Linkage Commission when Presbytery requests it, and in Home Mission situations where the CMI agrees it.) A Minister called to such a charge shall be a full member of the courts of the Church.”

13. The Clerk indicated that he had received several queries as to why it is that a Licentiate cannot normally be eligible for a part-time charge. There is an opinion that ordination to a first charge should be to a full-time charge. Following a period of discussion, it was agreed that it be recommended to the General Council that a representative Task Group be established to consider the matter.
14. The General Council subsequently established this Task Group and its report is included in Appendix 3, with a resolution to test the mind of the Assembly appended.

Confidential matters

15. The Committee during the year considered a number of items in private session, namely the following three matters:
 - (a) Following discussion of a particular case, advice was drawn up for the Linkage Commission regarding application of the General Assembly’s Protracted Illness Guidelines in a manner that would facilitate, as far as possible, acceptance into the General Assembly’s Prolonged Disability Scheme.
 - (b) Following discussion of a particular case, it was agreed that only service within PCI should count towards the calculation of Appropriate Ministerial Minimum and that this be noted as the policy for the future.
 - (c) Following discussion of a particular case, and having heard from the Clerk, the General Assembly Solicitor’s firm and the views of Counsel, the Committee gave authorisation for PCI robustly to defend a particular legal action taken against it.

Proposed visit of Pope Francis to Ireland

16. The Committee discussed the proposed visit of Pope Francis to Ireland in August 2018. Following a preliminary report to the March 2018 meeting of the General Council, the Committee reported in a fuller fashion to the April 2018 meeting of the General Council. At that time the indication was that Pope Francis would not visit Northern Ireland, but would spend two days in Dublin at events focussed on the World Meeting of Families – one day based around a sacramental celebration and one day based around a festival of families in Phoenix Park.
17. It was recognised that it would not be appropriate for the Moderator or any other formal representative of PCI to be present at any event focussed around sacramental worship, but that a meeting or attendance at a suitable non-sacramental event may be appropriate. It was also

noted that the timing of any invitation would most likely require a response prior to the General Assembly. Following detailed discussion, the following resolution was agreed by the Committee:

That in the light of the confirmed visit of Pope Francis to Ireland in August 2018, and recognising that an invitation is likely to be issued to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Moderator's Advisory Committee recommends to the General Council that the Committee be authorised to agree a response on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Such response may include the acceptance of any invitation for the Moderator or others to meet with Pope Francis or to attend an appropriate non-sacramental event.

18. Following discussion the General Council at its April 2018 meeting, the following resolution was agreed:

That in the light of the confirmed visit of Pope Francis to Ireland in August 2018, and recognising that an invitation is likely to be issued to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, that the General Council meet to agree a response on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Such response may include the acceptance of any invitation for the Moderator or others to meet with Pope Francis or to attend an appropriate non-sacramental event.

Calls on behalf of the General Council

19. It was noted that since the restructuring of the General Assembly Boards into Councils, it was now the responsibility of the General Council to issue formally calls on behalf of other Councils of the Assembly, with the exception of Global Mission Workers and Home and Urban Mission Ministers. This covers, amongst others, Healthcare, University, Prison and Forces Chaplains. The Committee acted on behalf of the Council in issuing some calls since the last meeting of the General Council. The Committee recommended, and the General Council agreed, that the Moderator's Advisory Committee shall act on behalf of the Council in the issuing of such calls between meetings of the Council.

MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

APPENDIX 1

REQUEST TO BE ENROLLED AS A MINISTER EMERITUS OF A CONGREGATION

1. Relevant section of the Code:

Code Par 226 (a): When a minister, instead of retiring in the usual way, on account of old age, infirmity, sickness or other cause recognised as adequate by the Presbytery, voluntarily resigns the pastoral charge of his congregation and the resignation has been accepted by Presbytery, he may, if the Presbytery so propose and the Assembly decide, have his name enrolled as Minister-Emeritus of the congregation; and shall in virtue of such enrolment be a member of the superior courts of the Church. As such he shall continue under the jurisdiction of Presbytery and shall be subject to the provisions of these rules regarding the acceptance of paid appointments applying to ministers in active duty or ministers without charge.

2. Steps to be followed:

- 2.1 The minister concerned requests that the presbytery proposes that the General Assembly have his name enrolled as Minister Emeritus of the congregation concerned. (Note – if enrolled as a Minister Emeritus the minister concerned will no longer be eligible to receive a call to any congregation.)
- 2.2 Presbytery agrees to propose that the General Assembly enrolls the minister concerned as Minister Emeritus of the congregation concerned. (Note – it is best to consult the kirk session concerned.)
- 2.3 The resolution of presbytery is forwarded to the Clerk of Assembly, who will arrange to have it included in the General Assembly Reports. (Note – this should ideally be done immediately after the March Presbytery at the latest.)
- 2.4 The Moderator's Advisory Committee considers any comment and/or recommendation it may wish to make to the General Assembly regarding the proposal of the presbytery.
- 2.5 The General Assembly make a decision regarding the presbytery proposal. (Note – two members of presbytery must be present in the House to formally propose and second the relevant resolution.)

MODERATOR’S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

APPENDIX 2

CONTINUING AS CLERK OF PRESBYTERY FOLLOWING RESIGNATION FROM A CHARGE

1. Relevant sections of the Code:

Par 61 The Presbytery shall consist of:

.....

- (j) such other ministers or ruling elders as the Assembly may from time to time determine.

Par 97 The General Assembly shall consist of:

.....

- (h) ministers or ruling elders who are ex-officio members of the General Assembly in virtue of their appointment as:

.....

- (ii) Clerks of Presbytery.

2. Content of a possible Memorial:

2.1 If a Memorial is brought by presbytery it should:

- (a) State that when the minister concerned becomes a minister without charge, it is the presbytery’s desire that he remains Clerk of Presbytery, at the pleasure of the presbytery.
- (b) Ask the General Assembly to facilitate this by determining that the minister concerned, on their resignation from his charge, shall continue as a member of the presbytery under Code Par 61(j), so long as they remain in post as Clerk of Presbytery.

2.2 It should be noted that this would not change the status of the minister concerned as a minister without charge, but it would make him ex officio a member of the General Assembly under Code Par 97(h)(ii).

MODERATOR’S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

APPENDIX 3

Calls to Part-Time Ministry Charges

1. Following a report from the Moderator’s Advisory Committee, the General Council at its March 2018 meeting set up a Task Group “to consider the issue of whether Licentiates should be eligible for call to a part-time Charge”. In reporting back to the April 2018 meeting of the Council, the Task Group, convened by the Deputy Clerk, noted:
 - (a) In 2010 the General Board proposed the introduction of part-time ministries, and in its report to the General Assembly (210 Reports pages 93f) stated:

“It should be clearly understood that any provision of posts in PCI which were deemed to be part-time Ministry of Word and Sacrament would be open only to those who *are already ordained as Ministers of Word and Sacrament.*” (Italics as per original).
 - (b) The following resolution was passed (2010 Minutes page 71 Resolution 35):

“That the General Assembly adopt the Scheme for Part-Time Ministry.”
 - (c) On the basis of this, the Union Commission brought Guidelines to the 2011 General Assembly which included this wording concerning Part-Time Ministries (2011 Reports pages 90ff):

“Such charges are not normally open to licentiates but only to those who are already ordained as Ministers of Word and Sacrament.”
 - (d) A revised set of Guidelines was brought by the Linkage Commission to the General Assembly and noted in 2016. The wording concerning Licentiates was identical (2016 Reports page 167).
 - (e) It should be noted that, where a Part-Time charge is linked to something else such as a hospital chaplaincy, then that is counted as a full time ministry and Licentiates may be called to such.
2. The following historical background was taken into consideration:
 - (a) Whereas previously Licentiates were ordained as Assistant Ministers on the call of a Kirk Session after six months’ service, this was changed. The change was such that Licentiates now serve two years and two months before being eligible for a call by a congregation (or congregations) at which point they are ordained. The reasoning for this change was that ordination ought to be to the fullest measure of ministry of word and sacrament, and the call be by a congregation.

- (b) To some extent the part-time ministry scheme replaced the old 'Restricted List' which enabled those whose life-circumstances made ministry in a larger congregation difficult to be called to a 'light-duty' charge. Only ordained ministers could apply to go on the restricted list, and these were generally over 55 years old. It was noted that all those who have been called to part-time ministry so far have been of more mature years.
 - (c) It was also noted that no one, whether licentiate or ordained minister, can be called to a part-time hospital or university chaplaincy.
3. In discussion it was noted that generally in Christ's church ordination to part-time ministry is available, particularly to tent-making ministries. It was agreed that there did not appear to be any reason in Presbyterian polity to prevent it.
 4. Some practical issues on connection with part time ministries were discussed, including:
 - (a) If a first charge, how long will someone stay if what they really want is a full-time ministry?
 - (b) Is the motivation for seeking a part-time call simply that they cannot get a call elsewhere?
 - (c) If they are younger/married with family, how will they afford this option?
 - (d) There is the danger of them being pressurised into doing full-time ministry for part-time pay (or of them being carried by their own enthusiasm into such a situation).
 - (e) Some part-time charges are 'lost causes' and will lead to the disillusionment of those younger ministers ordained there.

It was considered that many of the above could either apply equally to previously ordained ministers, or are for the licentiate themselves to consider before accepting a call.

5. Consideration was given to whether the Linkage Commission be given latitude to decide whether calls to part-time ministries should be open to Licentiates on a case by case basis, but was this not considered helpful.
6. The Task Group recommended, and the General Council agreed, that a resolution permitting Licentiates to be called to a part-time ministry be presented to test the mind of the General Assembly.

TREVOR D GRIBBEN, Convener

DIALOGUE AND RESOURCES TASK GROUP

1. Established in 2015, the Dialogue and Resources Task Group (DRTG) has been given the brief to provide pastoral assistance for individuals, and families seeking to relate their Christian faith to LGBT matters.
2. Following on the series of workshops held for Ministers in 2016-17 the DRTG provided a similar series of workshops for ruling elders in 2017-18. These were held on a regional basis, bringing elders from a cluster of presbyteries together. Mr Rob Wood from the True Freedom Trust was the invited facilitator at each of these; and whilst the attendance was somewhat varied and uneven, all present did engage in the conversation together.
3. The DRTG has sought and been granted permission from the General Council to extend its working life for one further year. Having sought to begin a conversation and provide resources from Ministers and ruling elders the Task Group is currently considering how it might provide further resources at a congregational level; in the coming year the Task Group will be engaged on this business.

ROB CRAIG, Convener

HUMAN IDENTITY TASK GROUP

1. In the autumn of 2017 the General Council established the Task Group as a means of seeking a Biblical and pastoral response to the complex and often difficult issues facing PCI members, families, ministers, congregations and wider society in respect of gender identity. The Group consists of the Rev Prof Bill Addley (Convener); Mr Gavin Norris (Secretary); the Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly; Rev Prof Michael McClenahan; the Rev Daniel Kane and others from medical, educational, youth work and public policy backgrounds.
2. At the time of writing, the Task Group has met on three occasions to date: 12th December 2017, 1st February 2018 and 27th February 2018.
3. The Task Group is planning to produce and organise resources that provide Biblical, theological and pastoral guidance, and to help the PCI to engage with the wider cultural issues at play in the current debates about gender identity.
4. The Task Group is conscious of the urgent need to get good, accessible material from a Biblical standpoint into the hands of PCI members, as some have already requested guidance in this area. Members of the Task Group read together Vaughan Roberts' short book *Talking Points: Transgender* and agreed that this is an excellent resource the group can recommend to the wider Church. To maximise our members' confidence in this resource it would be beneficial to produce

a customised version with a 'PCI Introduction' at the beginning with endorsements from people within the denomination. The Task Group has contacted the book's publishers and they are willing to facilitate this. On the Task Group's recommendation, the General Council agreed that that 3,000 customised copies of *Talking Points: Transgender* with a PCI introduction at the beginning be printed and circulated to each Minister and congregation.

WILLIAM ADDLEY, Convener

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 3

Wednesday – 4.30pm

DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

1. The Doctrine Committee has had several significant matters before it since the last meeting of the General Assembly and, to carry forward this remit, the Committee met on five occasions, in addition to a number of meetings of small groups and a significant amount of work by key individuals.

Report of the Church of Scotland Theological Forum on “An Approach to the Theology of Same Sex Marriage”.

2. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland received an invitation from the Church of Scotland to comment on the recent report of their Theological Forum to their 2017 General Assembly, “An Approach to the Theology of Same-Sex Marriage” and the General Council requested the Doctrine Committee to draw up comments for its consideration. The Doctrine Committee found the Church of Scotland report to be theologically unconvincing and needing to be re-examined. The report in Appendix 1 was drawn up by the Committee and was adopted by the General Council (under powers conferred on the Council by Par 272(3) of the Code) as the response of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and forwarded to the Church of Scotland.

Same-Sex Couples and the Sacraments

3. At the October 2017 meeting of the General Council the following resolution was passed:

That the Doctrine Committee be requested to draw up guidance for Kirk Sessions where someone in a same-sex marriage or civil partnership wishes to be received onto the Communion Roll (either on presentation of a Disjunction Certificate or on profession of faith), or wishes to present a child for baptism.

4. The report in Appendix 2 was drawn up by the Committee and was received by the General Council at its meeting in March 2018, with the following resolution also being passed by the Council:

That it be recommended to the General Assembly that appropriate training be offered to Kirk Sessions on the theology and practice of the Church’s understanding of ‘a credible profession of faith’ and the pastoral guidelines on homosexuality.

Participation in Multi-Faith Civic Events

5. The Committee reported to the October 2017 meeting of the General Council that it had reviewed the report and possible courses of action which were reported to the 2017 General Assembly. The Committee recognised that there was a need to consider the important issues in greater detail in light of a number of factors:
- (a) Current trends in the public square are focused on inclusion;
 - (b) Christians are concerned about the nature of true worship;
 - (c) The ‘optics’ are significant in terms of what most people understand to be happening at these events;
 - (d) There have been huge changes in society, and especially in the Republic of Ireland, and the church has achieved very little in many areas of public life and morality;
 - (e) There is a need for greater understanding in terms of what is happening at these events;
 - (f) Symbolism is important;
 - (g) The church must seek to maintain a witness before the watching world.

As a result the Committee agreed that a conference, under the auspices of The Church in the Public Square initiative, would be beneficial in terms of helping us to achieve some clarity on the key issues. This would be aimed at key people in the church, including the Council for Public Affairs.

6. The Committee reported to the March 2018 meeting of the General Council, both on the conference held on Friday, 26th January 2018 and on its further consideration regarding participation in multi-faith civic events (see Appendix 3). The report was received by the General Council, with the following resolution also being passed by the Council:

In light of the rapid change in society, both north and south of the border, it is recommended to the General Assembly that the following statement be issued by the Press Officer on behalf of the General Council at appropriate times relating to civic events in either jurisdiction:

- (a) *The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as a witness to Christ, affirms the God-given dignity of all people, from all faiths and none, on account of their bearing God’s image. Furthermore, we affirm our solidarity with all our neighbours in our common life together. However, as a Church committed to the Lordship of Christ, we decline to participate in interfaith worship or to acknowledge the ultimate claim of any state to control religious worship.*
- (b) *The Presbyterian Church in Ireland recognises that her leaders and members will consider participation in sequential multi-faith civic events where there may be opportunities to read the Bible, speak about God’s grace in Christ or pray for people in need. However, out of concern for God’s glory and the good of our neighbour, we decline to participate in nontrinitarian interfaith worship.*

DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

APPENDIX 1

RESPONSE TO CHURCH OF SCOTLAND THEOLOGICAL FORUM REPORT 2017

1. The Doctrine Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland welcomes the invitation from the Church of Scotland to comment on the recent report of their Theological Forum to their 2017 General Assembly. The committee recognises that this report – An Approach to the Theology of Same-Sex Marriage – is the latest in a long line of reports produced for the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and understands that the issues are long-standing and contested within the Church. They also address urgent pastoral and cultural matters. The Doctrine Committee offers the following response to the various sections of the report.
2. In such a potentially pivotal moment for the Kirk it appears almost eccentric to base the report of the Theological Forum on one slender and idiosyncratic account of sexual ethics. In the view of the Doctrine Committee a report of such moment for the Church of Scotland requires far more robust apparatus.¹
3. More fundamentally, the committee wishes to highlight the various hermeneutical options offered in the report. The committee rejects the presentation of biblical interpretation offered in the report. Admittedly the report begins acknowledging that “[p]ractically everyone falls into a spectrum between two poles” but then proceeds with an exposition of interpretive method that will lead to a perfect theological subjectivity. The report states:

Another more inclusive argument in favour of same sex relationships rests on a distinction between the written text of Scripture and the living word of God, the latter being associated with Jesus Christ who speaks to us in our hearts and consciences. According to this argument, we owe our allegiance to Jesus Christ the Word made flesh rather than adherence to the literal words of Scripture, and, for that reason, if people believe that Jesus is now calling the Church to a new understanding of how faithfulness may be displayed in human relationships, this should be taken seriously as a contemporary form of obedience. (1.5)

This is to suggest that our Lord’s present word to his church is at odds with what he spoke during his earthly ministry and contradictory to what was written by his Spirit-anointed apostles.

1. Robert S. Song, *Covenant and Calling: Towards a Theology of Same-Sex Relationships* (SPCK, 2014)

3. Although this section of the report is only seeking to “summarise the different tendencies of interpretation” (1.3) it is increasingly apparent that this is the position being advanced by the Theological Forum. Again, the report states:

[M]ore conservative readers [tend] to focus on the words of Scripture and more inclusive readers [tend] sometimes to look through rather than at the words of the text (1.7).

4. The committee maintains that there is a faithful Christian reading of Holy Scripture that attends to the witness of the prophets and apostles which extends careful attention to both the very words of the Hebrew and Greek text (perhaps even to the jots and tittles?) and at the same time reads the texts in their canonical, cultural, and redemptive historical context. The committee does not believe that this is an impossible or endlessly enigmatic task. Reformed churches still hold to the perspicuity of Scripture.
5. Furthermore, in a previous year, the Church of Scotland received a report on wealth and poverty which contained copious references to Scripture texts. In the report – A Right Relationship with Money – arguments were based on the apparently plain and straightforward meaning of texts without the need for an anguished ‘looking through’ rather than a ‘looking at’ the words.²
6. The committee acknowledges the account of the development of legal practice in western society in Section 2. Most of this material is based on a single academic article entitled ‘The Natural Law and Innovative Forms of Marriage: A Reconsideration.’³ The various historical vignettes fail to help in addressing the question that is of basic significance – How are creatures required to live? It seems the purpose of this section is to persuade the Church that the historical practice of the Church involved “a complex and contested set of institutional practices.” (2.3.11). Yet it is hard to reconcile the various cultural complexities of previous eras with the radical suggestion that marriage is other than an exclusive male-female union. Indeed, the ultimate weakness in this historical survey is that although there have often been times of cultural and institutional complexity, no previous generation concluded that marriage was anything other than an opposite sex union.

The committee does not accept that the fundamental definition of marriage can be conceived of as a reflection of constantly evolving social conventions. Rather, it believes that the marriage union of husband and wife is an essential revelation of God’s purposes in creation and redemption.

2. ‘A Right Relationship with Money’ (2012).

3. J. Porter, “The Natural Law and Innovative Forms of Marriage: A Reconsideration.” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 30, 2 (2010), pp.79-97.

7. The final argument of the report is the most problematic. The authors argue (2.4.2-2.4.15) that Christ's coming inaugurates a new age in which the Second Adam inaugurates his Kingdom and brings all things under his rule, and "does not do so by procreation" (2.4.7). Several responses are in order. First, the Committee believes this is a clear example of an over-realized eschatological perspective. Of course, the gospel proclaims that we will one day be like the angels in heaven (Matt. 22:30), but it is an over-realized eschatology to claim angelic experience now.
8. Secondly, although Song's argument is rooted in Scriptural motifs and the language of Genesis, it severs the link between nature and grace. No longer does grace perfect nature. This would tend towards creating a dualism that separates the supernatural from the natural. In contrast, the Reformed faith confesses that grace restores, renews, and raises the natural. Bavinck summarizes it this way: "[R]e-creation is not a system that supplements creation, as in Catholicism, not a religious reformation that leaves creation intact, as in Luther, much less a new creation, as in Anabaptism, but a joyful tiding of the renewal of all creatures."⁴
9. Thirdly, the suggested new paradigm, replacing heterosexual v homosexual with procreative v non-procreative, defines marriage far too narrowly in reproductive terms. The biblical-theological warrant for this move is not presented and the theological tradition of the church has long included within the goods of marriage aspects of human flourishing distinguishable from reproduction yet exclusive to marriage.
10. The Doctrine Committee offers this response with sincere prayers for the flourishing of the Church of Scotland under the Word of God. The plea of the committee is that the Kirk would return to the clear teaching of the Holy Scriptures and the great tradition of the Reformed catholic churches. The committee believes that the trajectory developed by the Theological Forum will lead the Kirk to a place of profound loss and will result in the Church of Scotland losing its confessional fidelity, gospel witness, and pastoral effectiveness.

4. Jan Veenhof, *Nature and Grace in Herman Bavinck*, trans. Albert M. Wolters (Dordt College Press, 2006), p.15.

DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

APPENDIX 2

SAME-SEX COUPLES AND THE SACRAMENTS

1. The Doctrine Committee was asked to consider a request from the General Council to prepare guidelines for Kirk Sessions to address the issue of same-sex couples who may seek communicant membership (either by presentation of a disjunction certificate or on profession of faith) or who may request the baptism of a child.
2. The Committee approached this issue in the understanding that the General Assembly has already agreed pastoral guidelines on homosexuality and has offered substantial pastoral advice for Kirk Sessions.⁵ The focus of this report is on the specific theological question of what constitutes a credible profession of faith and how it is to be understood and applied in these particular pastoral situations.
3. The response of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to questions of who is to be received on to the communicant roll of a congregation or whose children ought to be baptised is straightforward: those who make a credible profession of faith. Consequently, the Code states that names are only to be entered on the roll of communicants after the Kirk Session “has satisfied itself as to their knowledge, soundness in faith and Christian experience” (40.2). Similarly, when it comes to the question of the recipients of baptism, the Code makes it clear that “a minister shall encourage baptism of the children of all such as make a credible profession of faith. More shall not be required, nor less accepted, by way of profession than that authorised by the Church as a whole” (83.1).
4. Such an understanding has deep roots in Reformed, and indeed Augustinian, ecclesiology. As Calvin pointed out, the church visible is “the whole multitude, dispersed all over the world, who profess to worship one God and Jesus Christ” (Inst. 4.1.7). Given the church’s obvious lack of infallibility in knowing the heart and judging genuine profession (and what Calvin believed to be the common reality of false profession) the minister and elders judge on the basis of what is visible i.e. the credibility of profession of faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord. Such judgments can of course err, and so, rather than exclude a true believer, these decisions are to be made with charity. Hence The Book of Public Worship (2016) states that “A credible profession is one which, in the judgment of charity, may be believed.”⁶

5. ‘Pastoral Guidelines on Homosexuality’ in *The Church and Human Sexuality*, Report and Guidelines adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (Moderator’s Advisory Committee, 2013) pp.35-47.

6. *The Book of Public Worship* (Council for Mission in Ireland, 2016), p.11.

5. It is important to clarify that within the Reformed tradition the notion of a ‘credible profession’ is effectively a shorthand for not only a credible profession of Christ as Saviour but also a credible walk in obedience to him as Lord.
6. This is the clear testimony of Scripture. Genuine repentance will ‘bear fruit in keeping with repentance’ (Matt. 3:8; Luke 3:8). Jesus said ‘If you love me, you will keep my commandments’ (John 14:15). The peace and mercy of God rests upon those ‘who walk by this rule’ i.e. the fact that the gospel brings about ‘a new creation’ (Gal. 6:15-16). The Apostle John wrote that ‘we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him’ (1 John 2:3-4). James said that it was not enough to profess faith but that true faith is shown in good works (Jam. 2:18). Paul warned the Corinthian church about the danger of failing to judge by the standards that God had revealed. The apostle viewed public sexual sin as one example of a type of sin that would bar someone from participating in the privileges of membership until there had been repentance and restoration (1 Cor. 5:1-5, 11; 2 Cor. 2:6-7). Paul gives the same counsel to the church for dealing with ‘anyone who does not obey’ apostolic teaching (2 Thess. 3:14).
7. In the context of its discussion on baptism the Confession speaks of those who ‘do actually profess faith in *and obedience unto* Christ’ (28.4). The Larger Catechism answers the question ‘Unto whom is baptism to be administered?’ as follows:

Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers from the covenant promise, till they profess their faith in Christ, *and obedience to him*, but infants descending from parents, either both, or but one of them, professing faith in Christ, *and obedience to him*, are in that respect within the covenant, and to be baptised.⁷

8. James Bannerman in his classic work on Presbyterian polity, *The Church of Christ*, addresses the issue:

It is to the Church as a visible society that the ordinance of discipline has been entrusted; and it is in conformity with its character as the Church visible, that *the administration of discipline in the admission or rejection of members* must be conducted. ... [T]he evidence on which a candidate for admission may be rightly received into the communion of the Church is not a positive proof of regeneration – which no man can give to or receive from another, – but the evidence of a credible profession of faith in Christ, *and a corresponding conduct*.⁸

7. Westminster Larger Catechism, Q.166 (italics added for emphasis).

8. James Bannerman, *The Church of Christ: A Treatise on the Nature Powers, Ordinances, Discipline and Government of the Christian Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1869), pp.35-36.

9. In Chapter 6, on ‘The members of the Church’, Bannerman says:

So long as the terms of Church membership are acknowledged to be *a visible religious profession, and a corresponding character and conduct to credit it*, there can, with ordinary intelligence and singleness of desire for the purity of the house of God, be no great difficulty in deciding upon such kind of evidence. Thus far, and up to this point, there is a definite rule to walk by, and a competent knowledge to enable the officer-bearers of the Christian society to judge in the matter. *They have power to judge of the outward profession and outward conduct of the candidate for Church membership*; and having the power, they are responsible for the right exercise of it. But when the judgement is transferred from the external profession and character to the inward conviction and experience of the candidate – when, instead of being called upon to determine the credibility of what is seen and may be known in the outward man, the office-bearers of the Church are charged to decide upon the reality of what is unseen and cannot be certainly known in the inner man – it is plain that there is a task committed to them which they are utterly incompetent and unqualified to discharge... [T]he reason for his admission to Church membership... [is] pronounced on his *visible profession and his outward conduct*. The judgment on his spiritual state belongs only to God, and may form the reason for his admission among the members of the invisible Church. The judgment on his outward profession belongs to man, and ought to form the only ground of his admission to, or exclusion from, the membership of the visible Church.⁹

10. The issue of a credible profession of faith is one which has been addressed by Irish Presbyterians in the past. The very influential *A Catechism on the Government and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church* (1835) addressed it as follows:¹⁰

- Chapter IV ‘Discipline of the Church’
- VI. When is a person to be regarded as making a *credible* profession of faith in Christ, and to be admitted to the Communion?
- That man is to be viewed as making a credible profession of religion, who manifests an acquaintance with the leading doctrines of the Gospel, who declares himself a believer in these doctrines, who professes that his heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God, *and who maintains a conduct and conversation becoming the Gospel*.

9. Bannerman, *The Church of Christ*, pp.79-80.

10. John Barnett and James Denham, *A Catechism on the Government and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church*, sixth edition (Belfast, 1840), p.14.

11. John Murray argued: “It is by divine institution that the church, as a visible entity administered by men in accordance with Christ’s appointment, must admit to its fellowship those who make a credible profession of faith in Christ *and promise of obedience to him.*”¹¹ Or similarly, according to Charles Hodge, “the terms of church-membership under all dispensations have been the same, namely, profession of faith *and promise of obedience.*” For Hodge a profession is believable if it is “one against which no decisive, tangible evidence can be adduced.” He offers the example of an individual who “avows a purpose of obedience while leading an ungodly life” and contends that “the Church is authorized and bound to refuse to receive him.”¹²
12. For A.A. Hodge, a credible profession was one that was “sufficiently corroborated by the daily life of the professor” and as such was “ground for the presumption that the person is a member of the true Church, and consequently constitutes him a member of the visible Church, and lays an obligation upon all other Christians to regard and treat him accordingly.”¹³ Elsewhere A.A. Hodge summarised a credible profession as one that “involves a competent knowledge of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, a declaration of personal faith in Christ and of devotion to his service, and a temper of mind *and a habit of life consistent therewith.*”¹⁴
13. This emphasis is seen in the pamphlet on ‘The Baptism of Children’ produced by the Board of Christian Training as it explains the notion of a credible profession as follows: it is “a profession accompanied by some understanding of the Christian faith, *a lifestyle in accordance with Christian values,* and public commitment to the worshipping Christian community.”¹⁵
14. Dr Vern Poythress develops guidelines for the application of this idea of a profession being credible if it is accompanied by a believable willingness to walk the path of obedience and discipleship. He explains that as the Kirk Session seeks to make a judgment it must avoid twin errors that he labels “indifferentism and rigourism.” On the one hand, indifferentism fails to take seriously the need for credible evidence of repentance. On the other, rigourism “simply misunderstands Christian growth” and has “a false conception of the purity of the church” in

11. John Murray, *Christian Baptism* (Philipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980), p.36 (italics added for emphasis).

12. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (London: Nelson, 1873), 3.574 (italics added for emphasis).

13. A.A. Hodge, *The Westminster Confession: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1869), p.425.

14. A.A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology* (London: Nelson, 1879), 114 (italics added for emphasis).

15. www.presbyterianireland.org/Utility/About-Us/Sacraments/Baptism.aspx (italics added for emphasis).

that it requires at the beginning a degree of sanctification that only comes with maturity.¹⁶

15. The conclusion must be that a credible profession of faith involves a lifestyle that is in accord with Christian values and biblical teaching. Deviation from that Christian lifestyle may take many forms and we do not wish to create an unnecessary hierarchy of sin or designate one lifestyle to be the only one which disqualifies people. Kirk Sessions need to recognise that Christian discipleship requires an acknowledgment of the Lordship of Christ in every area of life and they should ensure that congregations are encouraged to live in a way that is consistent with their profession of faith.
16. The Doctrine Committee recognises the danger of giving the impression that there is the only area where sacramental discipline might apply. However, the current request to the Doctrine Committee asks for guidance in one particular area.
17. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has a clear position on marriage and human relationships based on the teaching of the Bible.
 - (a) The position that has been clearly and consistently adopted in PCI is that homosexual activity is not consistent with Christian discipleship since it does not accord with the will of God expressed in his moral law.
 - (b) The apostolic witness in the New Testament unambiguously regards homosexual activity as contrary to nature, understood as God's created order, and that it sets forth a permanent principle of creation, not a culturally limited perception.¹⁷
18. In light of our understanding of Scripture and the Church's understanding of a credible profession of faith it is clear that same sex couples are not eligible for communicant membership nor are they qualified to receive baptism for their children. We believe that their outward conduct and lifestyle is at variance with a life of obedience to Christ.
19. In this context it is important to emphasise that the Church invites and welcomes all who wish to sit under the means of grace at public services and to have access to the pastoral care and counsel available within her fellowship. Like her Lord, she reaches out to all with love and compassion. This posture of grace and welcome should not in itself be confused with moral indifference or approval of any behaviour contrary to God's Word. It is rather the warmest of invitations to receive Christ Jesus as both Lord and Saviour in all of life.

16. Vern S. Poythress, 'Indifferentism and Rigorism' *Westminster Theological Journal* 59.1 (1997) p.15.

17. Stephen N. Williams, 'The Question of Homosexuality' in *The Church and Human Sexuality: Report and Guidelines Adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland* (Moderator's Advisory Committee, 2013), p.7.

20. As with all who have adopted a lifestyle that is not in accord with Christian values, the responsibility of minister and Kirk Session is to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15) and encourage such individuals to walk in the ways of the Lord and to honour Christ in all their behaviours and relationships (Eph. 4:17-24). This discipling process requires careful instruction and personal counsel and ought to be a priority for Kirk Sessions as they provide pastoral oversight for all people under their care.¹⁸

DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

APPENDIX 3

Participation in Multi-Faith Civic Events

1. In response to the request of the Church for guidelines on participation at multi-faith civic events, the Doctrine Committee presented a report to the 2017 General Assembly.¹⁹ This was a continuation of the consideration given in the 2007 Report and which recognised the need for further thought given the changes in our situation. The Committee noted in the 2017 report that substantial reflection on the theological basis for involvement in multi-faith events might be facilitated by an event which helped to orient us to these complex issues and we should draw on the expertise of scholars who have a particular interest in this area.
2. A symposium was held on Friday, 26th January 2018 to which members of the General Council, the Council for Public Affairs, the Doctrine Committee and students for the ministry were invited. They were addressed by Dr Daniel Strange, College Director of Oak Hill Theological College, London, and by Professor Francis Campbell, Vice-Chancellor of St Mary's University, Twickenham.
3. Dr Strange outlined the unique challenges facing the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in addressing this issue, and the importance of recognising the intersection between the theology of religions and public theology. He acknowledged that his consultations with other scholars in the reformed world had been unsuccessful in terms of providing templates or direct advice in addressing the issue before us. He believes that an important key in helping us to understand non-Christian religions is that of idolatry.

[N]on-Christian religions are sovereignly directed, variegated and dynamic, collective human idolatrous responses to divine revelation behind which stand deceiving demonic forces. Being antithetically against yet parasitically dependent upon the truth of

18. The Westminster Larger Catechism, Q.173

19. General Assembly Annual Reports (2017), pp.103-15.

the Christian worldview, non-Christian religions are ‘subversively fulfilled’ in the gospel of Jesus Christ.²⁰

4. This understanding of non-Christian religions sees them as distortions and displacements of divine revelation which possess features that are similar to, and which counterfeit, divine revelation. The Gospel of Jesus Christ can therefore be understood as the ‘subversive fulfilment’ of such religions.
5. From the perspective of the Committee, while the issue of idolatry raises many questions concerning the implications of religious error and the nature of acceptable worship, it is clear that there is a prior theological issue concerning the exclusive claims of the Lord Jesus Christ and the application of his sole mediatorial role to broader questions of religious worship.
6. Dr Strange advocated the development of a theological vision which will inform both strategy and tactics, and the need for clarity, creativity, imagination and proactivity as we navigate the complexities. As Reformed Christians, we must subversively fulfil and ‘re-possess’ values like liberty, mercy in judgment, natural rights, and openness to speech.
 - (a) It is in fact Christianity that does the work of forming citizens for common life and the public good. The irony would be that Christianity would remind society how to be (classically) liberal.
 - (b) Late modern liberal democracy – as the default configuration of the earthly city today – is at the same time ultimately deficient and disordered, and often disorders our loves. So our political engagement requires not only dismissal or permission or celebration but rather the hard, messy work of discernment in order to foster both ad hoc resistance to its ultimate pretensions and ad hoc opportunities to collaborate on penultimate ends.²¹
7. In commending a ‘subversive fulfilment’ framework and vision which loves God and neighbour, he concluded that:
 - (a) We should affirm (and be seen to affirm) the God-given dignity of people from other religions on account of their bearing God’s image.
 - (b) We should affirm (and be seen to affirm) our solidarity and ‘being-together among all people’ (sunousia as distinct from koinonia).
 - (c) We must not affirm (or be seen to affirm) religious ‘cherished’ pluralism or syncretism.
 - (d) We must not affirm (or be seen to affirm) the ultimate sovereignty of the State.

20. Daniel Strange, *Their Rock is not as our Rock: An Evangelical Theology of Religions* (Leicester: Apollos, 2016), p.239.

21. James K.A. Smith, *Awaiting the King: Reforming Public Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), pp.17, 148.

8. Professor Campbell addressed the issue from the perspective of an experienced diplomat who has had to arrange ‘multi-faith civic events’ and who has extensive involvement in inter-faith dialogue. Not only has he advised governments on how to handle faith groups but he has offered some useful practical points for faith groups to apply when dealing with governments. He encouraged the Church to go for substantial engagement over tokenistic activity, and not to be too shy or retiring. By understanding policy frameworks, we can influence government and policies through accessing appropriate channels at the right time.
9. There was a helpful response from those who attended the conference with most suggesting that the Church should not remove itself from participation in such multi-faith events but that any engagement should not compromise our confessional commitments. A number of key questions were raised about the circumstances under which Presbyterians might participate, for example, what is the difference between a ‘worship service’ and a ‘religious civic event’?
10. In a further reflection on the discussions that took place at our conference, Dr Strange wrote an editorial for *Themelios* in which he made the following points:²²
 - (a) “The topic of engaging with multi-faith civic events might appear on the surface to be a textbook open-and-shut case. Our theology of religions cannot be syncretistic, neither will we want to be perceived as being syncretistic to a watching world. Against all other so-called ‘gods’ which are lifeless and futile idols, we proclaim the transcendent uniqueness and crown rights of Jesus Christ our Lord, ‘Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved’ (Acts 4:12).”
 - (b) “However, there are some complications. While our theology of religions might ask soteriological and alethic questions, the answers to which push us in one direction, our public theology asks different questions which pull us in a different direction. We are aware of the dangers of cultural extractionism, of our mandated Christian (and ecclesial) civic and public responsibilities, and of that same ‘watching world’ perceiving by our action or inaction, all kinds of things which affect the plausibility structures into which we witness and proclaim the exclusivity of Christ.”
 - (c) There are at least two distinctions that need to be made. “The first surrounds what we mean by ‘multi-faith civic events’. So ‘multi-faith’ can be distinguished from ‘inter-faith’; an ‘event’ needs to be distinguished from a ‘service’ (which itself needs careful definition) and the word ‘worship’ which is not used at all,

22. Daniel Strange, *Themelios* 43.1 (forthcoming April 2018).
Available at: <http://themelios.thegospelcoalition.org/issue/43-1>

even though we may conclude that that is what is happening.²³ “Moreover, what is being proposed is not a syncretistic ‘mush’ but in an attempt to avoid syncretism, consciously ‘sequenced’ or ‘seriatim’ contributions from faith communities.” The Committee believes it is vital to maintain the distinction between the assembly which meets for the covenant worship of God and multi-faith civic events at which prayers are offered for the nation and the Bible is read. It is a good and positive act of witness, in our increasingly secular societies, when Christian leaders can accept the opportunity to seek the help of the Triune God in the public space at civic events.

- (d) Now under *these* conditions, and if we could engineer the opportunity, could we start to conceive of a contribution that might not only not be syncretistic, but could be positively apologetic and evangelistic? How can we affirm the uniqueness of Jesus Christ in such a setting?
- (e) It may be helpful to note the format of a National Memorial Service held at St Paul’s Cathedral in London for the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire where seventy-one people had died, including a large number of Muslims. “As part of this service, Muslim schoolgirls sang a song called *Insha Allah*. While we may believe the inclusion of this element to be wrong, in the context of the Church of England guidance, we can begin to see how such a decision might be defended. They were Muslims and they sang a song to ‘Allah’. But the song’s words were carefully vetted so it could be argued that they were not *intrinsically* and *necessarily* Islamic. St Paul’s Cathedral was emphatic that this National Memorial Service was not interfaith. None of the prayers at the service were led by any but Christian representatives. Reports said, misleadingly, but not strictly inaccurately, that prayers were said by ‘faith community leaders’ when in fact it was only Christian pastors. That media outlets reported it as such just shows their lazy journalism. Overall the rationale for the inclusion of this element in the service seemed to be that, as an established church ministering to the whole community over an extraordinary and very public tragedy, this was believed to be making a reasonable adjustment without compromising the truth of the faith. Even if this was the rationale, some may still think it did compromise the truth of the faith, but it is not as clear-cut as some might imagine.”
- (f) We need to remember our particular situation as the Presbyterian Church in Ireland operating across the island and within two

23. One denomination which does give this definition in the context of this issue is The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. See their ‘Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events’ April 2004.

Available at: www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=354 Overall this was one of more helpful documents we read although it should be noted that when it comes to the issue of ‘seriatim’ prayers, the report notes that there was not unanimity within the Commission.

jurisdictions. Any discussion of ‘multi-faith civic events’ in Ireland cannot be conducted without recognition to the current state of Protestant-Catholic relationships and the wider civic discourse. “Our theology needs to be ethnographically sensitive and ‘lived’.”²⁴ so that we are “better students of the real”,²⁵ what Smith calls “...the ad hoc, contextualised work of discerning what faithful political presence looks like in this time, in our place, given these current challenges and these policy proposals and this political environment...”²⁶

- (g) It is important to remember the context in which the current pattern emerged. The Irish Republic produced a pattern for interfaith worship which was unacceptable to the Presbyterian community, and in response the Dublin and Munster Presbytery proposed the sequential model to avoid syncretism. This became the template for all civic events in the Republic of Ireland.
 - (h) In considering how we engage with ‘multi-faith civic events’ we have to navigate between two tramlines. One the one hand, a stance of subversive confrontation which proclaims the Lordship of Christ horizontally in the context of other ‘religions’ and vertically against the pretensions of ultimacy that come from late-modern liberalism which so often views religion as ‘window-dressing’ but is it itself deeply ‘religious’. On the other hand, a stance of fulfilling connection which recognises the time and our space and place: the story of “how modernity is the Child of Christianity, and at the same time how it has left its father’s house and followed the way of the prodigal.”²⁷ Using stolen capital such cultural conditions have birthed a strange looking child called the ‘multi-faith civic event’ which we need to relate to.
11. As the 2007 Report indicated, we recognise that “we are now operating within a new context with respect to the relations of Christianity, civil law and civil society” and that we need continually to re-assess the issue of church-state relations. The issue of participation in multi-faith civic events is an indicator of this need. The price for ongoing participation in civic events is constant vigilance to ensure clarity of purpose and appropriate boundaries between contributions. In particular, the language of ‘multi-faith civic events’ should be encouraged and, as far as possible, retained.

J STAFFORD CARSON, Convener

24. Pete Ward, *Introducing Practical Theology: Mission, Ministry, and the Life of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), p.64.

25. Christian Scharen, “Judicious Narratives”, or Ethnography as Ecclesiology” *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 58 (2005): pp.125-42, 131.

26. Smith, *Awaiting the King*, p.97.

27. Oliver O’Donovan, *Desire of the Nations*, p.275. Quoted in Smith, *Awaiting the King*, p.112.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER DENOMINATIONS TASK GROUP

1. The substantive report of the Task Group was received, and its main recommendations agreed, at the 2017 General Assembly (see 2017 Reports pages 72-99). The General Assembly, in receiving that report and accepting all of its recommendations apart from one, formally reaffirmed or established the position of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) with regard to:
 - (a) a paper outlining the Reformed Doctrine of the Church and its implications, emphasising the necessary commitment to both unity and truth with regard to inter-church relations;
 - (b) the categories of inter-church relationship used by PCI;
 - (c) the framework and principles for PCI's global mission partnership;
 - (d) the continued membership of PCI in the formal inter-church structures in Ireland;
 - (e) the continued membership of PCI of the World Communion of Reformed Churches;
 - (f) the General Assembly's councils being encouraged to continue to develop strategic partnerships, often on an ad hoc or project basis, with other denominations and parachurch organisations;
 - (g) a clear statement of PCI's position in regard to human sexuality and marriage – for the benefit of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland as a denomination and the integrity of PCI's witness;
 - (h) a stated commitment to ongoing biblical reform both in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and in the Church of Scotland;
 - (i) the development of a formal fraternal relationship with the Free Church of Scotland, through areas of mutual interest in the Councils of the respective Assemblies.
2. During the past year the Task Group has met on three occasions to take forward the remainder of its work, largely falling into three areas:
 - (a) PCI's involvement with inter-church bodies and para-church organisations in Ireland (in addition to continued membership of the formal Irish inter-church structures reaffirmed at the 2017 General Assembly);
 - (b) PCI's involvement in European and/or world inter-church bodies (in addition to continued membership of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, WCRC, as reaffirmed at the 2017 General Assembly);
 - (c) PCI's formal relationship with the Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church.

Other inter-church bodies and para-church organisations in Ireland

3. In the Task Group's 2017 Report (see 2017 Reports page 75, par 13(c)) it was noted:
 - (a) PCI, or its General Assembly councils, relates to a number of denominations through shared membership of other bodies e.g. Development Agencies; YouthLink (NI); Safeguarding Bodies; etc.
 - (b) PCI, or its General Assembly councils, relates to, and works in partnership with, a number of ad hoc bodies and parachurch agencies and independent fellowships with an inter-church dimension e.g. CARE; Evangelical Alliance; Life (NI); etc.
4. The Task Group would encourage the General Assembly's councils to proactively take up the commendation of the 2017 General Assembly "to continue to develop strategic partnerships, often on an ad hoc or project basis, with other denominations and parachurch organisations." (2017 Reports page 75. Par 17(b)).
5. Following further discussion during the past year, the Task Group recommends to the General Assembly that the Council for Public Affairs be encouraged to develop a formal relationship with Evangelical Alliance NI, possibly in a similar manner to the formal relationship that once existed between the former Board of Mission in Ireland and Evangelical Alliance (NI).

PCI's involvement in European and/or world inter-church bodies (in addition to continued membership of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, WCRC, as reaffirmed at the 2017 General Assembly)

6. The 2017 General Assembly decided that PCI: "explores membership of the World Reformed Fellowship, with a report coming to the 2018 General Assembly." (2017 Reports page 75, par 17(b)). Following discussion, the Task Group are not at present convinced that the potential benefits of membership of WRF are so clearly obvious that such membership should be actively pursued at present. However, the Task Group recommends to the General Assembly that the Church Relations Committee be asked to keep the issue of PCI's possible membership of WRF on its agenda.
7. The 2017 General Assembly also decided that: "PCI reviews its membership of both CCPE and CEC (recognising that it could associate with CEC through the Irish Council of Churches), with a report coming to the 2018 General Assembly." (2017 Reports page 75 par 17(c)). The Task Group noted that the General Assemblies of both these bodies are being held in 2018, normally being held every six or seven years. The Task Group therefore recommends to the General Assembly that the Church Relations Committee consider this matter further in the ensuing year and report with recommendations to the 2019 General Assembly, having received reports from its Convener, the Rev John Brackenridge, following his attendance in June at the

CEC General Assembly and from the Clerk of Assembly, following his attendance in September at the CCPE General Assembly.

PCI's formal relationship with the Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church

The United Reformed Church

8. During discussions over the last few years, both in the Task Group and in the General Council, it was recognised that the United Reformed Church (URC) has taken a similar line to the Church of Scotland in adopting a revisionist trajectory in relations to decisions about homosexuality. Some would argue that the URC had already gone much further than the Church of Scotland in this regard and had already taken decisions to further deviate from what PCI views to be the clear teaching of Scripture in these matters.
9. It was however recognised last year, in debate in the General Council, that PCI had not formally engaged with the URC on these matters in a similar way to how it had engaged with the Church of Scotland. Therefore, during the past year, formal talks were held with representatives of the URC, with a PCI delegation travelling to London in November 2017. There were full and frank discussions, held in a cordial and gracious manner, and the outcome was a clear recognition that the URC was not only on the same trajectory as the Church of Scotland, but was significantly further down that road. While it was noted that, because of the 'congregational' influence on URC governance, much of its legislation was of a permissive rather than directive nature, nonetheless the URC had chosen to deviate significantly from what the PCI would view as the clear teaching of Scripture.
10. The Task Group recognises that there has not historically been the same level of ongoing collaboration between the councils, committees and departments of the PCI and of the URC as there has been between the PCI and the CofS. The representatives of both the PCI and the URC agreed that future contrived symbolic activity would not be beneficial to anyone. However, it was agreed that, if there were future natural areas of collaboration (through respective councils, committees and departments) which would be for the mutual benefit of both denominations, then ideally such collaboration could take place.

The Church of Scotland

11. The 2017 General Assembly encouraged "members of the Task Group to hold informal discussions with those within the Church of Scotland who are working for its reform and renewal, and coming from the 'traditionalist view', in order that the PCI might offer constructive support." (2017 Reports page 76 par 18(e)). As a result, a meeting was held in Scotland in December 2017 between members of the Task Group and a number of ministers who had remained within the

Church of Scotland but held a clear traditionalist line on the presenting issues, and therefore differed strongly with the position and trajectory of their denomination.

12. While this meeting, along other informal contacts, was useful, and at the very least was a demonstration of PCI's support for those who hold a traditionalist view, it did not bring absolute clarity as to the way ahead. There is a range of views held by traditionalists within the Church of Scotland on the matter of PCI's ongoing formal relationship with their denomination, with the following simply being a summary:
 - (a) Traditionalists are generally glad that PCI made the initial decision not to send its Moderator to the Scottish General Assembly. They indicated that this helped ensure that traditionalists within the CofS could not be portrayed as a small and an irrelevant minority, but rather they were holding to the longstanding mainstream biblical position held in the wider church. Views on the decisions in subsequent years not to send the Moderator were however mixed, with some in favour of the Moderator now returning, while others were not.
 - (b) Most felt that “without relationship there is no influence for reform”, especially at denominational level. Some therefore felt that it would be helpful to have a working relationship at that level. Indeed specific natural co-operation at the denominational level (as opposed to contrived symbolic activity), could be of positive benefit for both denominations. PCI showing an interest in issues other than sexuality, particularly where the CofS is open to positive interaction, would be a sign of genuine loving concern that could be positively received.

Recommendations as to the way forward

- 13 The Task Group recommends to the General Assembly that the Presbyterian Church in Ireland [**one option to be selected**]
 - (a) should no longer accept invitations to the Moderator of the General Assembly, or any other formal delegation, to attend the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church and no longer issue invitations to those two denominations to attend the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
 - (b) should resume accepting invitations for the Moderator of the General Assembly to attend the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and should continue to accept such invitations from the United Reformed Church.
14. The Task Group recommends to the General Assembly that, where there are areas in which the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Church of Scotland could collaborate together for the mutual benefit of both (through their respective councils, committees and departments), then such collaboration should continue or could be considered.

15. The Task Group recommends to the General Assembly that future natural areas of collaboration with the United Reformed Church (through respective councils, committees and departments), which would be for the mutual benefit of both denominations, could be considered.

TREVOR D GRIBBEN. Convener

CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. Since the 2017 General Assembly, the Church Relations Committee continues to have an overview of the various inter-church bodies to which the Presbyterian Church in Ireland belongs, namely the Irish Council of Churches, the Irish Inter-Church Meeting, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe and the Council of European Churches. The Committee Convener, the Chairman (the Very Rev Dr Ivan Patterson) and the Rev Lorraine Kennedy-Richie sit on the Relationships with other Denominations Task Group and updated the Committee on the discussions taking place.

Irish Council of Churches and Irish Inter-Church Committee

2. Both the Irish Council of Churches Executive and the Irish Inter-Church Committee met on a regular basis throughout the year and the Committee received reports regarding their programmes of work. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland is represented on the Inter-Church Committee by the Committee Convener and the Clerk, with the Very Rev Dr Ivan Patterson joining them on the ICC Executive. The Clerk also sits on the Joint Management Committee, which oversees the financial and practical affairs of both bodies.
3. The AGM of the Irish Council of Churches took place on Thursday, 22nd March 2018 in Drogheda Presbyterian. At this meeting Bishop John McDowell completed his two year term as President of ICC and was succeeded by the Rev Brian Anderson of the Methodist Church in Ireland. The Very Rev Dr Ivan Patterson took up the post of Vice President of the ICC. The key note speaker was Mr Kevin Conmy, Joint Secretary of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Secretariat, who focused on the implications of BREXIT for the island of Ireland from the perspective of the Irish Government.
4. The annual Irish Inter-Church Meeting was held on Thursday 23rd and Friday, 24th November 2017 on the theme of 'Proclaiming Christ to Families Today'. Among the speakers were Fr. Timothy Bartlett, General Secretary of the World Meeting of Families, Dr Bridget Nichols, Church of Ireland Theological Institute, Dr Graeme Thompson, PCI's Youth Development Officer, Prof. Gordon Harold, Professor of Child and Adolescent Mental Health at the University of Sussex, Caroline

Bradley, National Representative of Care for the Family and Martin O'Brien, Journalist/Broadcaster specialising in religious affairs. Again, everyone on the PCI delegation felt that this was an excellent and very worthwhile meeting, with a high calibre input and helpful discussion sessions.

World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)

5. The Clerk of Assembly, the Rev Trevor Gribben, who was the PCI Delegate to the 2017 WCRC General Council, reported to the Committee as follows:

- (a) The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) is comprised of 80 million Christians in Congregational, Presbyterian, Reformed, United, Uniting and Waldensian churches. The WCRC, working with its 225+ member churches, is active in over 105 countries. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) was a founder member of WCRC's predecessor body, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.
- (b) The 26th General Council of WCRC was held in Leipzig, Germany from 27th June to 7th July 2017, under the theme 'Living God: Renew and Transform Us'. The Clerk of the General Assembly, the Rev Trevor Gribben, represented PCI and the Rev Cheryl Meban, a member of the outgoing Executive Committee was also present in a non-voting (but hard working) capacity.
- (c) The following is a summary of some of the main business of the Council:

(i) **Leadership:**

The Rev Najla Kassab, a minister in the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL), was elected as President of the WCRC. The Nominating Committee who brought a selection of nominees for the WCRC Executive Committee to the General Council said, "with her experience and many gifts, Najla's vision, insight, spiritual strength and grace make her the right person to lead us forward as President". The four vice-presidents are Rev Dr. Samuel Ayete-Nyampong (Ghana), Rev Dr. Lisa Vander Wal (United States), Rev Sylvana Maria Apituley (Indonesia) and Raissa Vieira Brasil (Brazil). They serve on a 22 person Executive Committee, with Dr Hefin Jones, of the Union of Welsh Independents, representing UK and Ireland – a position held for the past seven years by the Rev Cheryl Meban.

(ii) **Celebration:**

There was a genuine note of celebration running throughout the Council. This, of course, had much of its focus on the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation and the entire Council visited the place where it all began. Wittenberg is often referred to as the birthplace of the Reformation, and

the General Council held an impressive worship service in Martin Luther's Church. Historic sites were visited, along with time spent at the exhibition on the many facets of the Reformation, showing the impact the Reformation has had around the world.

As the Council was meeting, in what was formerly East Germany, there was also a strong theme of 'liberation from oppression' running through the Assembly. This featured a focus on the fall of the Iron Curtain, including a visit to Berlin and an impressive prayer service in the Nikolaikirche, where Christians meeting for prayer and witness contributed to the overthrow of oppressive communism in East Germany. The theme however was also reflected in the Council's focus on contemporary struggles for freedom and peace such as in Korea, the Middle East and Sudan, to name but a few. An important and powerful focus of the Council on the often violent subjection of women in many cultures, also picked up that same theme of liberation from oppression.

(iii) **Significant Decisions:**

Like many such councils, the WCRC General Council attempted to say something about almost everything, lest something was missed! This resulted in long and detailed discussion at the start of the week (often overrunning allocated time slots). The Council received lengthy papers on many themes such as Contemporary Theology, Justice and Gender Justice, Mission in Communion and the Strengthening of Communion. Introductions to most of this material can be found on the WCRC website (www.wcrc.ch). Discussion was set in the context of daily worship sessions along with group Bible study and a number of more formal services.

One of the most significant events of the 2017 General Council was the association of WCRC to the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ), drawn up initially between the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church. PCI were opposed in principle to the association of WCRC to JDDJ. PCI not only voted against it in the consultation stage prior to the Council but also provided WCRC with clear reason for doing so. This was drawn up by our Doctrine Committee and approved by our General Council. In Leipzig, PCI's opposition to the decision to associate was articulated and our formal dissent was both registered and noted in the minutes of the Council. It was stressed, both in the written material and in presentations from the platform, that the decision of the Council did not in any way associate an individual denomination to JDDJ, but rather the WCRC as an organisation. PCI's delegate was

graciously received, along with those from other Churches opposing association. It was apparent that this process was a European and North American priority, which was largely ignored by the overwhelming majority of WCRC Churches, especially throughout Africa and Asia – ‘a western obsession, not relevant to mission on our continent’ was the way one African delegate put it.

(iv) **Genuine Fellowship:**

Differences in theological understanding, both as it related to doctrinal statements and approaches to moral and ethical issues, were very evident. It was however interesting to note that the more conservative theological emphasis of PCI is shared by a significant number of member Churches of the Communion, as well as by individuals from other delegations. This is especially true with regards to Churches from Africa, Asia, many countries in Latin America and throughout Eastern Europe. There was also common ground found in relation to many issues with some Churches in North America, Australasia and Western Europe. Fellowship was real, even where difference existed, and there was a real sense of the world wide reformed family meeting in Council. In that context, many brothers and sisters, especially from Africa and Asia, greatly appreciated the stand taken and the speeches made by PCI and other more conservative western delegates.

The Council of European Churches (CEC) and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE)

6. The Conference of European Churches 15th General Assembly will be held from 31st May to 6th June 2018 in Novi Sad, Serbia. The 2017 PCI General Assembly appointed Rev John Brackenridge to represent PCI. There will also be representatives from the Church of Ireland, Methodist Church in Ireland and the ICC.
7. The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe will hold its 8th General Assembly from 13th to 18th September 2018 in Basle, Switzerland. The General Council appointed the Clerk, the Rev Trevor Gribben, to represent PCI.

Meeting with Church of Ireland

8. The annual meeting with representatives of the Church of Ireland was held on Tuesday, 30th January 2017 in Church House, Dublin. This covered issues such as ministering in linkages of a number of small congregations, engagement between theological colleges, and the implications of transitivity for inter-church relations.

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 4

Thursday – 8.00pm

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION TASK GROUP

1. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679 is a regulation in EU law on data protection and privacy for all individuals within the European Union. It will replace the 1995 Data Protection Directive (Directive 95/46/EC) and became enforceable from 25th May 2018.
2. The General Council appointed the GDPR Task Group on 10th October 2017 with this remit:
To produce advice and guidelines for:
(a) The councils and departments of the General Assembly
(b) Presbyteries and congregations
which will enable ongoing compliance with GDPR by 25th May 2018; and which will enable information/data which has previously been gathered or processed to become compliant.
3. The Task Group was authorised to secure the services of ANSEC (as required), and to either appoint or otherwise secure the services of an individual to resource and facilitate the work of the Task Group – as a charge on the Incidental Fund, with funding authorised by the Clerk and the General Council Convener.
4. The Clerk's Office wrote to all Presbyteries and Congregations making them aware of GDPR and the steps being taken by the General Council to offer support.
5. The Task Group has met on five occasions.
6. It is noted the Information Commissioner's Office makes these definitions:
 - “data controller” means a person who (either alone or jointly or in common with other persons) determines the purposes for which and the manner in which any personal data are, or are to be processed
 - “data processor”, in relation to personal data, means any person (other than an employee of the data controller) who processes the data on behalf of the data controller.

7. It has been agreed that for our purposes data controllers are the General Assembly, presbyteries and congregations. Employees are not separate Data Processors and it has been confirmed that volunteers are classified in the same way as employees.
8. In accordance with the authorisation given, ANSEC and Cleaver Fulton Rankin have been engaged to give Advice Support on GDPR and Mr Kirk Shilliday has been appointed as Project Manager and has signed a Consultancy Agreement.
9. The Deputy Clerk has written to independent bodies for which PCI processes data informing them that, while PCI will seek to fulfil its responsibilities as a Data Processor under GDPR, each has a responsibility to fulfil as Data Controller, and should satisfy themselves that they are compliant by 25th May 2018.
10. Training events have taken place for Assembly Buildings staff who are, at the time of writing, in the process of completing a Data Audit.
11. Implementation Plans for Presbyteries/Congregations have been agreed and for PCI Staff have been drawn up but are subject to formal Task Group agreement.
12. Training Events were organised for presbyteries and congregations in March and April on a regional basis, with the participation of the Project Manager, the Financial Secretary and the Deputy Clerk. These events have proven helpful to those who attended.
13. The following documentation has been sent to presbyteries/congregations:
 - Letter to Presbyteries and Congregations re GDPR
 - A Brief Guide to GDPR
 - Data Protection Lead Role
 - Data Inventory Template
 - Data Inventory Congregational (example)
 - Personal Data Action Plan
 - Personal Data Action Plan (example)
14. Further documentation is being uploaded to the PCI website on a rolling basis.
15. The Information Commissioner's Office has been written to concerning relationships between General Assembly, presbyteries and congregations in respect of GDPR. Following a reply, the General Assembly Solicitor's advice is that wording concerning the sharing of personal data among congregations, presbyteries and the General Assembly, should be built into the Code and thus be part of our constitution.

16. The following documents have been made available:
- Data Breach Policy Draft 1
 - Data Privacy Notice Draft
 - Data Protection Policy Draft 1
 - Subject Access Request Policy Draft 1
- Advice on data security for congregations is being considered.
17. In its work so far consultation has taken place with the Church of England and the Church of Scotland. Information has been shared with the Methodist Church of Ireland and the Presbyterian Children's Society. On Thursday, 8th March the Project Manager and the Deputy Clerk attended a GDPR event in London organised by the Churches' Legislation Advisory Service. This confirmed the approach we are taking, and gave further helpful information and advice.

EDGAR JARDINE, Convener

ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATIONS TASK GROUP

Introduction

1. This is the third interim report to the General Assembly from this Task Group. The remit given by the 2015 General Assembly was: *A new Engagement and Consultations Task Group be formed to carry forward the examination of the issue of engagement (between Presbyteries and the new Councils and between Presbyteries and congregations) and that this group subsume the work of reviewing Consultations.*
2. Last year's report was concerned with two matters: engagement between Presbytery and Congregations; and the new Consultation Process. The General Assembly passed the following resolutions:
 - (a) That the General Assembly encourage Presbyteries to adopt some of the good practice suggestions outlined in the Report of the Engagement and Consultations Task Group in order to improve engagement in their meetings and also with Congregations.
 - (b) That the General Assembly direct the Engagement and Consultations Task Group to consider and report back on the issue of the role of Presbyteries as agents for missional strategy.
 - (c) That the General Assembly approve the new Consultations Process as in Engagement and Consultations Appendix 1 and direct that it be used by all Presbyteries from 1st January 2018 onwards.

The Role of Presbyteries as Agents for Missional Strategy

3. The Task Group had this subject as an agenda item for its meeting in September, but found that it could not be meaningfully discussed on its own. Other items on the same agenda all ran together into one discussion. Those other items included:
 - (a) improving engagement within presbytery and between presbytery and congregations;
 - (b) relations between presbyteries and councils;
 - (c) role of Direct Presbytery Nominees and Presbytery Agents.

Discussion led the Task Group to focus on the relationship between councils and presbyteries.

Engagement between Councils and Presbyteries

4. Part of the Report to the 2017 General Assembly offered guidance on how to make presbytery work better, improve the handling of business and try and create some space for items which help to equip ministers and elders as well as helping congregations and councils become more engaged with what presbytery is doing.
5. The relationship between councils and presbyteries naturally also impacts the relationship between these bodies and congregations also – it is a seamless robe. However the Task Group has concentrated on how presbytery can effectively engage with the seven councils. It continues to believe that, into the future, presbytery needs to be an increasingly effective regional hub for envisioning, equipping and enabling ministers and congregations under its care.
6. Councils have a desire to engage meaningfully with presbyteries but questions are being asked if this is feasible. If councils send reports down after each council meeting then presbyteries become deluged with at least seven reports twice a year; so all of this needs careful consideration and thought. It is appreciated that the administrative workload of presbyteries is increasing, in particular where there are commissions in place or there are many vacancies.
7. A meeting of some members of the Task Group with Clerks of Presbytery was held on 18th January to consider these issues. The Convener presented a possible strategy for prioritising business into the future based on SPACE (see below). Albin Rankin shared regarding an East Belfast initiative called *Together: A Company of Pastors*; David Bruce spoke about the Belfast Conference and David Thompson spoke on the dynamics between councils and presbyteries.
8. A meeting was also held on 21st February between the Convener and Council Secretaries to ascertain how there could be improved engagement between councils and presbyteries.

9. **Creating SPACE in presbytery.** The Task Group believes it would be helpful for the future if presbyteries sought to include the following five elements in their agendas:
- S: Strategic thinking** – encouraging more strategic thinking alongside Linkage Commission at times of vacancy; encouraging more missional thinking in general within their bounds.
 - P: Pastoral care** – seeing the importance of presbytery formally and informally for the health and support of ministers.
 - A: Accountability** – mainly exercised through presbytery as a court and also through the updated Consultation process.
 - C: Creative communication** – seeing presbytery as a hub of communication between councils and congregations and between congregations and as a place for ministers to share more on what they have learned on sabbatical/reading and a place to celebrate stories of faith and mission.
 - E: Equipping** – facilitating councils in their work through the informing, training and equipping of ministers and elders on a presbytery by presbytery basis.
10. There seemed to be broad agreement among those consulted that SPACE was a good ideal to aim for and also a recognition that we were at a tipping point with growing congregationalism and centralisation which could lead to presbytery being squeezed out in the future. Not for the first time we heard the question being asked – *What is presbytery for?*
11. One of the issues that recurs is pressure of time and yet ministers and elders do seem to find time for the things that they value and which they find helpful. The experience of the East Belfast Company of Pastors initiative, meeting twice a month in addition to the Presbytery meeting, seems to bear that out.
12. A good number of ministers devote their energies to council matters rather than to presbytery. It is understandable if they then devote less of their available time to presbytery. It would also seem to be a trend that younger ministers have less ‘brand loyalty’ to presbytery and seem to prefer to pour their energies into their congregation and to fighting the growing tide of secularism. This however may not in the long run be good for them as they will need the pastoral support which presbytery can provide.
13. While it is recognised that proximity has its strengths when it comes to thinking strategically about what is going on within a presbytery’s bounds, it is also seen as a weakness and a threat as ministers are reluctant to make big strategic calls about neighbouring parishes and it is easier to push such hard decisions up to the Linkage Commission.
14. There also seems to have been very little strategic thinking at presbytery level on church planting or even on congregations combining in evangelistic initiatives. A silo and competitive mentality seems to be

prevalent and a lack of adaptability within our Presbyterian structures to address a fast-changing culture. The Belfast Conference seems to have been an exception to this but its genesis has been a lengthy affair and has met many road-blocks. Positive outcomes are hoped for from this and that it can become a model for other presbyteries to learn from.

15. In terms of engagement with councils there seems to be a lack of consistency among councils in communicating with presbyteries and their representatives. Some councils offer orientation to Direct Presbytery Nominees which is good and helps in describing what is expected of them.
16. The danger of swamping presbyteries with too much material at one or two times of the year was noted. Councils seem to prefer to communicate by email rather than providing material for a combined Newsheet as was once the case after Board Weeks.
17. Neither Clerks of Presbytery nor Council Secretaries seem to meet regularly together and this may be worth exploring for the future for better communication, ownership of priorities and for fellowship. It was noted that the Church of Scotland has regular meetings of such.
18. The General Council passed the following resolutions concerning engagement between councils and presbyteries:
 - (a) That each council should offer an orientation meeting with representatives from presbytery.
 - (b) That once a year Clerks of Presbytery should meet together with the Clerk and Deputy Clerk of Assembly and with Council Convenors and Secretaries to hear from each other and discuss possible priorities and events for the year(s) ahead.
 - (c) That presbyteries should seek every opportunity to work with councils in organising training and other events.
 - (d) That presbyteries should seek to organise their business in such a way as to allow SPACE for the five elements specified in this paper and that one presbytery be chosen by the Task Group to pilot this framework over the next year.
 - (e) That presbyteries should endeavour to be more proactive in their engagement with the Linkage Commission prior to and during vacancies.

Consultations

19. The Task Group will continue for a final year to assess the success of the new Consultations scheme (it will be meeting with Clerks in January 2019), and we also would like to explore some recent thinking around adjusted models of presbytery governance.

NORMAN CAMERON, Convener

CENTRAL PRAYER COORDINATION TASK GROUP

1. The Central Prayer Coordination Task Group was established by the General Council at its October 2017 meeting. Its remit was to examine the various prayer requests that go out centrally to congregations and individuals from PCI and to make recommendations as to how these can be coordinated.
2. The Task Group has met four times. Its membership includes congregational ministers; clerks of presbytery; council office bearers; the Press and Web Officer; the Deputy Clerk.
3. The titles of the various prayer requests that go out from the centre were collated, taking note of how they originate, the format/media they are communicated in, the frequency of publication, and the number of people who access each title.
4. The Task Group identified a there is a natural distinction between materials produced for private individual use and those produced for corporate use, such as in Sunday worship, mid-week services and small groups as well as a distinction between different types of prayer request – for instance some councils will have prayer requests that focus on individuals, some will focus on events.
5. The opinions of a number of young people who had attended the 2017 Youth Assembly were surveyed. Account was also taken of the helpful points arising from a discussion on the matter that had taken place within the Council for Congregational Life and Witness.
6. It has been concluded that print, email and social media (including the PCI website) all have valuable roles to play.
7. The Task Group presented some recommendations to the March meeting of the General Council, all of which were accepted. At the request of the Council the Task Group made further recommendations concerning practical implementation of the recommendations. The outworking of this will be as follows:
 - (a) A weekly prayer resource will be released by email each Thursday to ministers and others who request it. The format will enable it to be folded in two to make an A5 leaflet. It will be suitable for copying and distributing on Sundays at worship, and can also be used in other corporate settings, for example at midweek services or prayer meetings. It will be divided into seven daily sections so that, for personal use, there is a prayer topic for each day. Some congregations may wish to distribute copies to those who cannot attend church. The first section will include prayer based on the Moderator's diary and current topical matters. On the same front page will be the prayer topics for the Sunday. This will rotate around the work of the various councils through the year and include a link to a PowerPoint slide which can be shown at worship. The prayer topics for Monday to Saturday will include

five days each devoted to the work of the Mission Department, with the remaining day set aside for the work of other departments on a rotational basis. This weekly prayer resource will replace *Prayer for Today*, *Prayerline* and *Prayer Focus*, all of which will be discontinued.

- (b) Each department will have a designated amount of space, and will decide how to use that space, being responsible, as at present, for compiling its own prayer requests. The requests will be transmitted to the Creative Production Department which will publish them as above, and also on Social Media as in (e) below.
- (c) Departments will continue to be able to produce their own material for prayer. A distinction is made here between what is released generally from the centre (such as the weekly prayer resource), and what individuals have specifically to subscribe to in order to receive it (such as the monthly prayer letters from Global Mission Workers).
- (d) The *Presbyterian Herald* and *Wider World* will continue to include items for prayer.
- (e) With the main focus on personal use, the appropriate daily prayer from the weekly prayer resource will be included on the PCI Website, Facebook page and Twitter feed.
- (f) The printed *Prayer Handbook* is discontinued as the information in it is, by its very nature, quite general, and can be over a year out of date by the summer after publication. Print continues, however, to have a role to play. Up to date prayer requests in printed format can be made available in congregations through the weekly prayer resource and the Creative Production Department is being asked to consider how the *Presbyterian Herald* might provide a fuller printed version of prayer topics than it presently does.
- (g) The Creative Production Department is also being asked to consider how the content of the weekly prayer resource might additionally be distributed through a specific PCI Prayer App.
- (h) It is intended to implement these changes from 1st September 2018.
- (i) The General Council is continuing the Task Group in existence for a further period to monitor how things work out in practice and, if necessary, recommend changes.

JIM STOTHERS, Convener

USE OF CONGREGATIONAL PROPERTY BY OUTSIDE BODIES TASK GROUP

1. The Task Group is pleased to note that the relevant presbytery reports to last year's General Assembly show that all Kirk Sessions in Northern Ireland have adopted the Equality Policy.
2. Since the last General Assembly the Task Group has sought, through the General Assembly Solicitor, to ascertain the situation concerning equality legislation in the Republic of Ireland, and whether, and if so in what form, an Equality Policy, Guidelines for Kirk Sessions, and Licence Agreement templates might be drawn up for that jurisdiction.
3. It has regretfully come to the conclusion that it is not appropriate to issue such documentation. It is fully aware that some congregations have sought central guidance or even direction: the lack of this should not be interpreted as a lack of interest or concern for our congregations in the Republic. In fact the opposite is the case. The Task Group believes that the issue of central guidance or documentation could leave congregations in the Republic of Ireland exposed legally.
4. It should be recalled that the particular reason that the guidance and documentation was issued centrally for congregations in Northern Ireland, and the adoption of the PCI Equality policy was made compulsory for kirk sessions, was to be able to avail of particular provisions in the law in Northern Ireland. Those provisions do not exist in the Republic of Ireland, and so the same reason does not apply.
5. Taking the above into account, the General Council, on legal advice, has accepted that it is not possible for the General Assembly to issue documentation for use in the Republic of Ireland due to the different legislation that applies there; it also accepts that it is not appropriate for the Council to draw up an Equality Policy, Guidelines for use of Church Premises, or Licence Agreements for use in the Republic.
6. The Council advises that, if congregations in the Republic of Ireland require absolute certainty concerning risk, they may decide not to licence the use of premises at all to outside bodies.
7. The Use of Congregational Property by Outside Bodies Task Group has been thanked by the General Council for its services and discharged.

JIM STOTHERS, Convener

CHARITY REGISTRATION TASK GROUP

1. The Task Group did not meet formally during the year, but the Clerk, Financial Secretary and General Assembly Solicitor continued to keep a watching brief and offer advice as necessary.
2. The office-bearers continued to monitor progress regarding charity registration in the Republic of Ireland, where the situation remains largely unchanged since the report to the 2017 General Assembly. During 2016-17, the Charity Regulatory Authority (CRA) in the Republic of Ireland called forward and registered the General Assembly centrally along with those individual congregations that already had a separate CHY number. The bulk of congregations, along with the Presbyteries, were to be called to register at a later stage. A time-scale for this has yet to be set by the CRA.
3. The Finance Panel of the Support Services Committee issued, to all Presbyteries and congregations in Northern Ireland, detailed guidance notes for the use of congregations in making their annual financial returns to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. The first of these returns, relating to the 2017 financial year, are due in by October 2018.

JOHN HUNTER, Convener

HOLDING TRUSTEE TASK GROUP

1. The Holding Trustee Task Group is grateful to office-bearers in congregations and presbytery clerks for their work to date in carrying out a church wide survey on the trusteeship of congregational properties. A report was presented to the April meeting of the General Council indicating the responses received from presbyteries to the questionnaire sent to all congregations regarding their holding trustees, title deeds and any investments in the name of Presbytery Education Boards. The Council agreed that all presbyteries were to take steps to complete this exercise and report further, as necessary, to the Convener of the Task Group as soon as possible and by 31st October 2018
2. Analysis of the 449 questionnaires returned (94 not returned) provides the following information:
 - PCI's estate exceeds 1,600 congregational properties
 - Approximately 130 congregational properties have no deeds, or the deeds are missing
 - Although the Assembly recommends that the Education Board of the Presbytery should be appointed the congregational trustee (Code para 241(a)), Presbytery Education Boards are the holding trustees of less than 40% of congregational properties

- 14, or more, Education Boards hold congregational and/or presbytery investments (approx. £2.4m)
3. Issues concerning congregational property are often addressed to Presbytery Clerks and the Clerk of Assembly in the form of questions. These are a few examples of the questions that have arisen:
 - The deeds of our congregational property (and financial endowments) are in name of an Education Board of a Presbytery that no longer exists, what should we do?
 - Should holding trustees sign documentation for congregational loans and securities?
 - Can holding trustees be held personally liable if things go wrong?
 - Where should title deeds be stored and who can access them?
 - What requirements must be met before holding trustees can sign a lease on behalf of a congregation?
 - The Code states 'it shall be the duty of congregational trustees to carry out the lawful directions given to them on behalf of the congregation by the Congregational Committee' (Code Par 57). Do the trustees need access to independent legal advice?
 4. Discussions between the Convener of the Task Group, the Clerk of Assembly and the General Assembly's Solicitor, have concluded that it would be helpful to issue guidance regarding property matters, in the form of a booklet, to assist congregational committees, presbyteries, and holding trustees fulfil their roles. It is proposed that this would be done during the next year through the General Secretary's Department under the guidance of the General Assembly's Solicitor.
 5. The main reason for setting up the Holding Trustee Task Group was to examine the question that has been raised by Presbytery Clerks, often the Secretaries of Presbytery Education Boards, as to whether Presbytery Education Boards are fit for purpose as holding trustees of congregational properties and to seek advice regarding alternatives.
 6. Presbytery Education Boards operate under legislation drawn up under the Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act, 1885. The General Assembly's Solicitor has advised that there are other ways under which property can be held in trusteeship and modern legislation would be more flexible to meet the future needs of the church in a complex legal environment.
 7. It has also become clear that there are irregularities regarding the functioning of some Education Boards and there is need for a review of existing practices that would result in consistency throughout the church.
 8. Given the present situation and the legal advice that has been offered, it is proposed to ask the General Assembly to consult presbyteries regarding a proposal to bring all the Education Boards into one, or possibly two, holding trustee bodies. (It may prove necessary to have an NI body and an RoI body.) The terms of reference of the body

would be agreed by the General Council and, dependent on a positive outcome of the consultation, legislation could be drafted for the 2019 General Assembly or as soon as possible thereafter.

9. Any change to Presbytery Education Boards would not impact upon congregations wanting to appoint their own named trustees and, as at present, all trustees of church property would continue to be holding trustees, and unable to act without the instructions of the congregational committee.

ROBERT HERRON, Convener

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 5

Friday (approx. 10.00am)

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

1. The nominations Committee has met twice since the last General Assembly.

Refreshing the Pool

2. The Committee conducted an online survey with those who had submitted their names to the nominations ‘pool’ in 2014 and had not yet been used. A spreadsheet has been compiled from the replies which will enable much easier identification of those with particular interests or skills relevant to each council or committee to be quickly identified. A number of people have indicated that they no longer wish to be considered for service on councils or committees.
3. It is becoming more difficult to find suitable people in the ‘pool’ for the various councils and committees who have not already been serving in some capacity. In the summer it will be four years since the pool was created. There may be people who would now be suitable of whom Committee is not aware. In addition, it is impossible to know how many of those serving presently will want to go for a second four-year term at the 2019 General Assembly.
4. While it had been previously anticipated that the pool would not be refreshed until 2023, the option was left open of refreshing it earlier, if the number of those available for nomination should diminish. Experience in using an online resource (‘Survey Monkey’) has enabled the Committee to gather much more relevant information on members of the pool than was available using a one-page paper form in 2014. At the same time the Committee is conscious that ministers and presbyteries must have ‘ownership’ of the names put forward. Accordingly, at the request of the Committee, the General Council has agreed:
 - (a) That the pool be replenished before the end of 2018.
 - (b) That it be advertised (via *Presbyterian Herald*, PCI website, presbytery, email to all ministers and specifically target PCI UTC students (not just ministerial), licentiates, deaconesses, youth and family workers etc.) and that ministers be asked to make it an agenda item for kirk session.

- (c) That an electronic nomination facility be made available along the lines of the previous Survey Monkey, with similar information being obtained via a paper form.
- (d) That kirk session and presbytery ownership be secured by referring all nominations to ministers and clerks of presbytery for approval before inclusion in the pool.

End of First 4-year terms

- 5. The first four-year term of council and committee members will come to an end in 2019. The General Secretary's Department will enquire whether those appointed are willing to serve for a further four years.

Nominations

- 6. Nominations to convenerships are contained in an appended resolution while nominations to membership of councils etc. are contained in the Nominations Booklet.

JONATHAN CURRY, Convener

2017 SPECIAL ASSEMBLY TASK GROUP

A. REVIEW OF THE 2017 SPECIAL ASSEMBLY

- 1. Following the 2017 Special Assembly, 'Everyday Disciples', the Special Assembly Task Group met to review the Assembly and to consider both format and frequency of future Special Assemblies. Much of the following arises out of feedback gleaned from the follow-up survey which 182 of the 600 delegates (30.3%) completed.

General Comments

- 2. The vast majority of responses were overwhelmingly positive with appreciation particularly expressed for the 'time out' to think about the importance of discipleship at both an individual and congregational level and the opportunity to share experiences of discipleship.
- 3. The main criticisms of the Special Assembly included (a) the predominance of male speakers at both the plenary sessions and the seminars (b) the suggestion that more could have been made of the afternoon slots (c) the use of two North American keynote speakers from the same 'theological stable' and (d) a few negative comments regarding the leading of the praise.
- 4. The Task Group was encouraged by the positive feedback and appreciation of both keynote speakers. Ray Ortlund and Randy Pope were tasked with two different remits – the former to open up God's Word to delegates, centred around the theme of 'Gospel Culture', and

the latter to share key elements of good disciple-making practice, based on his own experiences.

5. The seminar programme appears to have been particularly well received by most delegates. The Task Group is extremely grateful to all seminar facilitators and hosts who helped to deliver this programme.
6. The praise, competently and sensitively led by Jonathan Rea and members of New Irish Arts was generally appreciated. The video material and follow-up interviews helped to keep the overall theme of the Assembly in perspective, and it was good to have local voices from across the island take part. The Task Group is grateful to Rev Aaron Ditty for leading the evening plenaries and to others who helped to lead worship at various times.
7. The logistics and practical arrangements ran smoothly (on the whole), thanks to the sterling work of David Thomson, the Assembly Administrator, ably assisted by his wife Karen and daughter Claire, along with Lois Gibson and Laura Whitcroft from CCLW, who helped to oversee the registration process.
8. The Task Group appreciates the support of James McCormick and staff from the Creative Production Department for providing publicity and directional material, and the work of the Delivery Team, who assisted with stewarding and various other tasks.
9. Recordings of the plenary sessions and the seminars have been edited and are now available to download from the PCI website.

Where do we go from here?

10. It is the prayer of the Task Group that delegates left the Special Assembly inspired to live as everyday disciples in a generation and culture which is fraught with obvious challenges, but also rich in opportunities to make Christ known, both near and far.
11. It is the belief of the Task Group that the Special Assembly marked a defining moment for our church, regarding (a) our response to Jesus' call in the Great Commission to 'go and make' disciples, and (b) our vision of everyday discipleship as a crucial means of individual and congregational growth and fruitfulness – a moment which the Task Group would be sad to lose.
12. In order that we do not lose the moment, and that this 'culture' of disciple-making, disciple-maturing and disciple-equipping becomes truly ingrained in the life of our congregations, intentional and clearly defined follow-up is vital.
13. The Task Group is delighted that the 'Essentials' Discipleship resource, produced by the CCLW was launched at the Special Assembly, and is now being widely used in congregations throughout the denomination. This is an excellent 'first step' resource for congregations to help them explore the key themes and elements of everyday discipleship.

14. However, to seize the moment further, the Task Group is encouraged that Rick Hill, Discipleship Officer for CCLW, with the support of the CCLW's Discipleship Committee, is piloting a new resource, (as yet untitled), which will comprise a series of disciple-making conversations on 'relational discipleship', similar to the model profiled by Randy Pope at the Special Assembly, but tailored to an Irish Presbyterian context.
15. The format will comprise 4 series of 6-8 sessions each, with content to read, video material, a passage to unpack and questions to discuss. The series titles are:
 - (a) STORY / The Big Story of God
 - (b) RHYTHMS / Key Spiritual Discipline
 - (c) SEASONS / Following Jesus when circumstances change
 - (d) PLACE / Following Jesus in the daily places of life.
16. It is hoped that the first two of these will become available in September 2018, and it is the hope of the Task Group that this key resource will become widely used throughout the denomination in the following years.

B. FUTURE SPECIAL ASSEMBLIES

17. In the feedback, there were several appreciative comments about the relaxed atmosphere and sense of fellowship at the 2017 Special Assembly, which is difficult to capture at the more 'business-like' setting of the General Assembly. Several delegates suggested that the denomination should not wait 7 years before holding another Special Assembly and that we should allow ourselves the blessing of such a gathering more often.
18. Some notes of caution:
 - (a) There is a huge amount of work in planning a Special Assembly (a minimum of 2-3 years).
 - (b) The length of recent Special Assemblies (typically lasting over 4 days, Monday-Thursday) means that a lot of people struggle to commit to the entire duration, because of personal or work commitments.
 - (c) There were some challenging issues in 2017 with the Ulster University accommodating an event of this length during August. However, on balance, the Task Group still considers this to be the most preferable time of year to hold a 3-4 day Special Assembly. This needs to be borne in mind when considering the frequency of future similar events.
 - (d) There is a danger that if we hold a Special Assembly more often than at present, such events will not be 'special' anymore, and just become more 'routine'.

A Possible way forward for discussion.

19. The Task Group discussed the possibility of an ‘Interim Assembly’, to take place 2-3 years after a Special Assembly, based on the same theme, as a follow-up event. The aim of the Interim Assembly would be to keep the theme of the Special Assembly live in the denomination. It was suggested that in the longer term, there could be two Interim Assemblies between each Special Assembly.
20. Suggested features of Interim Assemblies might include:
 - (a) A two-day event – beginning at 10am on Day 1 and finishing at 5pm on Day 2.
 - (b) A hotel/conference venue that could cater for likely numbers (not necessarily at the North Coast).
 - (c) Overnight accommodation optional for one night.
 - (d) Not necessarily held during the summer months – perhaps over a Friday/Saturday in autumn/winter time.
 - (e) The use of a keynote speaker, seminar facilitators, worship leaders, prayer ministry, informal/fringe events.
21. This shorter follow-up gathering could be a great encouragement to the denomination between Special Assemblies, and keep momentum going, as the denomination explores and considers relevant issues outside the pressures of General Assembly business.
22. If there was support for an Interim Assembly arrangement in principle, consideration could be given to holding a follow-up gathering to ‘Everyday Disciples’ in Autumn 2020.
23. A Task Group would have to be set up to oversee the planning of an Interim Assembly in 2020, if the General Council agreed in principle to recommend such an event to the General Assembly. The finer details would need to be considered carefully, including budgetary considerations.

JOHN KIRKPATRICK and GORDON BEST, Co-Conveners

The Clerk of the General Assembly, the Rev Trevor Gribben, writes:

C. ADDITIONAL REPORT REGARDING FUTURE SPECIAL ASSEMBLIES

24. At the March 2018 meeting of the General Council, the Council received the above report of the Task Group. The Council also passed the following two resolutions:
 - (a) That further statistical data relating to the 2017 Special Assembly be provided by the Co-Conveners, including the numbers attending (broken down into ministers and others) and the number of congregations represented, to be available for consideration at the 10th April 2018 meeting of the General Council.

- (b) That the two suggestions, of further Special Assemblies every seven years and of an Interim Assembly, be given preliminary consideration by the office bearers on the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, with their initial comments to be available for consideration at the 10th April 2018 meeting of the General Council.
25. At the April 2018 meeting of the General Council, the Council received the report in the Appendix, as requested from the office bearers of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness. Following discussion the General Council resolved to accept the four proposals contained in this report and append a resolution to that effect for consideration by the General Assembly.

APPENDIX

Comments of CCLW Office Bearers on the Suggestions of the 2017 Special Assembly Task Group

Remit

1. *That the two suggestions, of Special Assemblies every seven years and of an interim Assembly, be given preliminary consideration by the office bearers of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, with their initial comments to be available for consideration at the 10th April meeting of the General Council.*

The 2017 Special Assembly statistics

2. Having gained access to the core statistics relating to the 2017 Special Assembly and available comparative figures for the previous event in 2010, we observe:
 - (a) An overall reduction in total attendance from 750 to 591.
 - (b) A reduction in residential delegates from 195 to 162.
 - (c) A reduction in non-residential delegates attending all days from 555 to 365.
 - (d) A reduction in total number of congregations represented from 240 to 228.
3. In terms of spread of congregations attending in 2017, the general picture is that larger and medium sized congregations of a more suburban nature located in Antrim and Down, formed the significant percentage of churches represented. There was significantly less congregational representation from west of the Bann, the more southerly presbyteries of Northern Ireland and the area covered by Monaghan and the Dublin and Munster Presbyteries.

The Emerging Picture

4. The picture emerging is typical of response to events and training offered on an ongoing basis by the Council for Congregational Life and Witness across the denomination. It reflects:-
 - (a) The numerical strength of PCI being located in Counties Antrim and Down when measured by total membership;
 - (b) The congregational spread being much wider, but distributed in smaller congregations in the rest of the Island;
 - (c) A general struggle to encourage already busy core members to attend extra denominational events beyond the regular patterns of their own congregation's activities. For this reason, we anticipate that any future Special Assembly would be likely to continue to evidence decline in delegate numbers and congregations participating, especially members staying residentially and committing to attend the whole event. Moving the event from the summer months to another period of the year is unlikely to increase availability of core members, in fact it would more likely have the opposite effect.

Impressions of the impact of Special Assemblies

5. Our impression is, that while Special Assemblies have been significant in the life of the denomination in recent decades, there remains a tendency to overstate both their immediate impact and ongoing influence on the development of individual congregational life and witness. Largely, this is due to the insuperable challenge of delegates translating their enthusiasm and learning from conferences back into the congregation in ways that enable those who didn't attend to catch the vision, to grasp and develop, locally and collectively, the area of congregational life and witness highlighted by the event.
6. This is an aspect of the wider consideration of the value of the model of extracting key leaders from their congregation for envisioning and learning. Its ability to create deep impact is increasingly questionable. A more fruitful approach may be to invest in a model in which the local congregation is the space and environment in which key leaders and wider membership are exposed to new ideas together and learn how to apply them in their situation in a local, collaboratively created, owned and implemented vision.

Conclusions

7. For these reasons we conclude that the vehicle of Special Assembly continues to play a significant denominational role in helping the church capture the moment for ministry and mission in Ireland, creating conversation, providing space for fellowship, networking and general encouragement. None of this is unimportant, particularly for denominational self-understanding and identity, but the Assemblies are

not a primary, significant means of embedding congregational change. Therefore, it seems important to identify a particularly strategic moment or theme as the reason to call another Special Assembly, rather than repeat the exercise on a seven year cycle.

8. Perhaps any future Special Assembly should be shorter, for example commencing with an evening celebration, followed by one full day programme and finishing at lunchtime the following day. This may encourage greater numbers of delegates and a wider spread of congregations to participate in the whole event. Given the continuing trend in reduction in numbers of delegates, consideration of alternative venues to the University of Ulster, Coleraine, should also be possible.
9. The primary, ongoing work of envisioning, equipping and enabling support and development of congregational life and witness is better served through the annual programmes and opportunities offered by CCLW (and other councils as appropriate) and delivered at congregational, presbytery and regional levels. It is difficult to see how an Interim Assembly would enhance that work, or whether it could garner significant participation from congregations.
10. Finally, should there be a desire for interim Assemblies and a fixed seven year Assembly programme, rather than base it on the return sample from the 2017, the mind of the wider church should be tested.

Proposals

11. We would therefore make the following proposals:
 - (a) That the suggestion of an interim, follow up event to the 2017 Special Assembly should not be pursued;
 - (b) That in early 2021, a Task Group, comprised primarily of members of the Priorities Committee and the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, be formed to prayerfully discern if there is an emerging theme for a residential Special Assembly to be held in 2024;
 - (c) That should such a theme obviously present itself to the Task Group, that a recommendation be brought to the 2021 General Assembly for a Special Assembly in August 2024 and suitable arrangements for delivery of such an event be set in place;
 - (d) That if such a theme does not obviously present itself to the Task Group, that no Special Assembly be held in 2024, but that the matter of future Special Assemblies, or alternatives, be considered by the General Council.

REVIEW OF MODERATOR'S YEAR TASK GROUP

1. The Task Group, chaired by the Rev Stuart Finlay, met on three occasions, covering a range of issues and reported with a general framework and specific recommendations to the General Council, as outlined in the Appendix. The General Council, meeting in March 2018, received the report and agreed that its specific recommendations and general framework be adopted.

APPENDIX

A. GENERAL POINTS

During General Assembly Week:

1. The Moderator's role is very clear; there should always be a past Moderator 'on stand-by'; the Moderator should continue to preach at Communion;
2. As there is now no system for setting a 'theme for the week/year', on balance it is recommended that from 2019 onwards, the Moderator was given a theme (ideally after consultation if possible).

Sundays:

3. Generally the system works well. Normally if a Moderator visits a congregation one year it is recommended that their successor should not go the next year.

General Assembly Councils, Committees etc:

4. It is recommended that the Moderator should continue to chair the General Council, the General Assembly Business Committee and the Council for Public Affairs (the latter as able). Other invitations to chair should normally be graciously declined, though each Moderator should seek to visit each General Assembly Council and Commission once during their year of office.

Pastoral role – illness and difficult circumstances of Ministers, Assembly Buildings staff etc:

5. Generally this is working well. It is recommended that the Deputy Clerk continue to have responsibility to keep the Moderator informed of illnesses in the ministry and Assembly Buildings. (Clerks of Presbytery are asked to keep the Deputy Clerk up to date especially with regard to Minister Emeriti.) Presbytery tours could be used for this and particularly with reference to Ministers Emeriti.

6. It is recommended that the Moderator, or if not available a former Moderator, should ideally participate in the funeral of ministerial colleagues. This should take the form of passing on the sympathy of the General Assembly and leading the main pastoral prayer. The Moderator should not be asked to do the tribute or to preach. (It is useful if the person doing the tribute could pass a copy of their text onto the General Secretary's office for use in drawing up a Memorial Record.) While recognising that the family's wishes are paramount, colleagues organising such funerals should seek sensitively to advise on the Moderator's participation and should ensure the Moderator or his secretary are kept fully informed. It is of course important to note that the General Secretary's office should be informed as soon as possible of a minister's death. It is also pastorally useful if the office is informed of the death of a minister's spouse.

Inter-Church involvement in Ireland:

7. Generally working well, through the Church Leaders Group (Ireland), the Inter-Church Committee and the Inter-Church Meeting.

Other Church Assemblies etc:

8. System for attendance at the Church of Ireland and Methodist annual meetings is working well.
9. Decisions to be made by the General Assembly re GB Assemblies.
10. Decisions to be made by the General Assembly regarding other 'further afield' Assemblies.

State, Civic and Public Square Events and Political Interaction:

11. It is recommended that the Moderator each year should visit formally Westminster, the Oireachtas and the Northern Ireland Assembly.
12. The Moderator will normally also attend a series of other 'national events', including Garden Parties (both in London and NI), Remembrance events (in both jurisdictions) etc.
13. The Moderator will receive invitations to a significant number of civic events and well as those run by a range of organisations. It is recommended that the advice of the Clerk of Assembly should be taken as to the appropriateness of attendance and the need for a deputy if the Moderator's diary does not permit attendance.
14. The Press Officer is at the disposal of the Moderator throughout the year, and it is recommended that all statements should be issued through the Press Office. Statements will often be drawn up, and initiatives taken, in consultation with the Clerk, the Council for Public Affairs and the Press Office. It is recommended that the Moderator should meet regularly with the Clerk and Public Affairs Officer to be briefed regarding current and developing public square issues and to be given guidance regarding interaction with both government and political parties in both jurisdictions.

Practical and Financial Arrangements:

15. It is recommended that the incoming Moderator should be free from his/her duties from 1st May to allow preparation time. A holiday in late April/early May is encouraged. Whoever is taking charge of their congregation should assume the duties from the start of May. Payment for cover of an Assistant Minister is for a period of 15 months (i.e. until the end of the following July). It is suggested that the incoming Moderator should not have any preaching engagements on the Sundays prior to and the Sunday following the Assembly.
16. The Moderator's special allowance is paid out of the Incidental Fund at the rate of the Basic Ministerial Minimum as fixed from year to year. It is recommended that approximately one quarter is paid prior to taking office during May, and similar payments are made at the end of other quarters.
17. The Moderator's normal stipend from his/her congregation continues as usual but congregational expense payments will normally be retained to off-set the costs of those who are deputising during his/her absence. The special allowance is intended to cover all official expenses for the year and is taxable.
18. The Moderator is responsible for all travelling and hospitality expenses (for himself and his/her spouse) incurred within the British Isles, including attendance as a corresponding member at other churches. The Moderator however is not responsible for travel and hospitality expenses for himself/herself on his/her overseas visit, nor for those of his/her spouse if they attend. Any loss of earnings by the Moderator, e.g. Chaplaincies, Clerkships etc. are reimbursed from Central Funds.
Overseas churches and other bodies vary widely in the degree of responsibility they accept for costs incurred: sometimes an 'invitation' involves no financial commitment whatsoever. Where there is any uncertainty, it is wise to offer payment on the spot for hotel bills etc. and to retain receipts.

B. PRESBYTERY TOURS

19. Moderators of the General Assembly (often accompanied by their spouse) visit a number of presbyteries during their year of office. These presbytery tours, which are some of the key weeks of a Moderator's year, are allocated by the Clerk of Assembly on a rotational basis, though this may be altered for local reasons.
20. The purpose of the tours is threefold:
 - (a) **Experiential.** To enable the Moderator to experience life and witness of PCI in various locations throughout Ireland.
 - (b) **Pastoral.** To encourage local ministers, elders and members as the Moderator visits manses, congregations and places of work.

- (c) **Profile.** To raise the profile of PCI in a locality through engaging with the community generating interest and associated press coverage.
21. When well thought through a Moderator's visit can usefully raise the profile of the presbytery and the life and witness of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and can sometimes prepare the way to make it possible for local ministers to follow up or gain access to people and institutions previously inaccessible.
 22. A presbytery tour will usually take place over eight days (Sunday to Sunday) and should ideally include one day free of engagements (often a Saturday) and part of a day mid-week.
 23. Given the strategic nature of presbytery tours, it is recommended that the number should be increased from three per year to four per year from the 2018/19 year onwards – ideally in the first weeks of October, November, February and March.
 24. **Initial Arrangements:** The presbytery moderator and clerk will ordinarily consult with colleagues and the GA Moderator pertaining to the engagements undertaken and will coordinate the overall timetable.
 - (a) **It is recommended that** there should be a meeting between one or more representatives of the presbytery and the GA Moderator at an early stage in the planning process. (The GA Clerk and/or his secretary may also be present at this meeting.) The initial thinking of the presbytery representatives should be discussed with the GA Moderator and possible amendments and additions agreed.
 - (b) The appropriate involvement of the Moderator's spouse during the week should be clarified.
 - (c) As plans evolve, the presbytery should ensure that the Moderator is briefed on the nature and expectations of each specific engagement. The Moderator should be accompanied by someone appropriate from the presbytery at all times and that meals should be included in the schedule. Accommodation should be arranged in consultation with the Moderator. Moderators may wish to make their own arrangements. While it may be appropriate to stay with colleagues, hotel accommodation may also be appropriate on occasions, with hotel expenses covered by the Moderator.
 - (d) **It is recommended that** the General Assembly Press Officer should be involved at an early stage, with opportunities discerned as to how to use the Moderator's visit to highlight widely the mission and ministry of PCI.
 25. A variety of engagements will be undertaken, varying according to the nature of the Presbytery and the gifting/specific interests of the Moderator, but will include engagements such as:
 - (a) Sundays – Preaching in four different churches (two each Sunday). Careful thought should be given to the strategic choice of congregations e.g. because of their location, needs or circumstances.

- (b) Visit to a presbytery meeting including opportunity to address the presbytery and meet ministers and elders over refreshments.
- (c) Mid-week 'celebration' event(s) for the whole presbytery. These could include an interview/slot on the Moderator's life, theme or overseas visit along with preaching/epilogue.
- (d) Pastoral visits to senior ministers emeriti/spouses or to manse families as deemed appropriate. It is important that the week's programme of events leaves space for this important aspect of a Moderator's visit to a Presbytery.
- (e) Event(s) for the encouragement of ministers and other ministry staff may well be appropriate. Dependent on the local context, it may be possible to hold a specific event for ministers' spouses.
- (f) Congregational or presbytery related projects – e.g. visits to congregational outreach projects in the community; Job Clubs; Night Light/Street Pastors visit.
- (g) Community Involvement - depending on whether it is an urban or rural context, visits to a variety of community contexts may be appropriate. The following are descriptive rather than prescriptive suggestions:
 - Seats of local government (normally national and devolved institutions are visited on other occasions).
 - Prison/Young Offenders institutions in company with the Chaplain to meet the Governor, staff and inmates.
 - University (perhaps invited to give a lecture)
 - Visit to university chaplaincy/Christian Union committee
 - Schools – primary and secondary, often speaking at Assembly or RE class
 - Special Schools
 - Nursing Homes
 - Hospitals
 - Hospice visit
 - Sheltered Housing project
 - Emergency Services: Fire, Ambulance, River or Sea rescue
 - Armed Forces visit
 - PSNI/Garda Siochana
 - Farm/fishery visits
 - Farmers market
 - International outreach contexts
 - Sporting clubs/matches

- Factory, manufacturing or local enterprise visits
- Cross Community projects
- Visits to people and places which have experienced recent tragedy/need eg location of flooding
- Radio/Newspaper/TV interviews

Other points of note:

26. The agendas of the General Assembly's Councils should by and large not be to the fore during a presbytery tour. The focus is on the ministry and mission of the presbytery and its congregations and the events and meetings organized should be locally focused. It may however be appropriate to visit specific PCI projects – seeking to acknowledge and enhance local involvement with such projects.
27. Programmes should be full enough to ensure the potential of a Moderator's visit is maximized, but not too full to mean that the Moderator does not have sufficient time to relate to people in the informal time before and after events. Likewise, space should be made for the important pastoral aspects of a Moderator's visit to a presbytery.
28. Ideally a 'debrief/feedback' meeting should be held shortly after a Moderator's tour has been completed. This should involve the GA Moderator along with a few representatives of presbytery and reflections of both the positive aspects of the tour, as well as those aspects with room for improvement, should be noted. (Again, the GA Clerk and/or his secretary may also be present at this meeting.)

C. PCI PROJECTS IN IRELAND

29. There are some 20 PCI projects in Ireland, the majority under the care of Council for Social Witness, and others under the care of Council for Mission in Ireland (see Table 1). In recent years the pattern of involvement for the Moderator with these projects has varied:
 - (a) Participating in a special event eg opening, anniversary.
 - (b) Visiting during a presbytery tour.
 - (c) Visiting after conducting a service in nearby congregation.
 - (d) 100th birthday visit.
 - (e) 2- 3 day tour of various projects to understand breadth of work.
30. The benefits of this engagement are:
 - (a) The Moderator gets first-hand experience of significant areas of mission and ministry of PCI.
 - (b) The Moderator can disseminate news of the projects throughout the Church.
 - (c) There is opportunity to encourage staff in their work situation.

- (d) There is opportunity to meet with volunteers and express appreciation for their work.
 - (e) There is opportunity to meet with residents/service users and to share in ministry.
 - (f) There is opportunity to meet with relatives.
 - (g) The Press and Media interest in the Moderator gives a profile to the projects.
 - (h) The Moderator will be equipped to address pertinent issues in ‘The Public Square’.
31. It is clear that a more structured approach with these projects would ensure each Moderator has as broad an experience as possible. Councils could ensure that all projects are covered by rota over a determined period of time - not every project needs to be visited every year. **Therefore it is recommended that:**
- (a) The Clerk should assist the Moderator by co-ordinating a programme of visits in consultation with the Secretaries of the Council for Social Witness and Council for Mission in Ireland. Not every project should be visited every year and projects which will be visited during a presbytery tour in a particular year should not be visited at other times in that same year. Both presbytery clerks and local ministers should be informed of and involved in these visits.
 - (b) Up to five days should be allocated for a focussed visit to these projects, with this best split into a three and a two day block. These blocks should come as early as possible in the Moderator’s year so that the experiences can be shared with the wider Church, with ideally with one block during the summer.
 - (c) This should not preclude other engagements as noted in point 1 above.

Table 1 – PCI Projects in Ireland

Project	Work	Council	Presbytery
Sunnyside House	Residential Home	CSW	Ards
Corkey House	Residential Home	CSW	Belfast North
Carlisle House	Substance Misuse Centre	CSW	Belfast North
Gray’s Court	Supported Housing	CSW	Belfast North
Thompson House	Offenders Hostel	CSW	Belfast North
Kinghan Church	Disability Service for Hearing Impaired	CSW	Belfast South

Project	Work	Council	Presbytery
Adelaide House	Residential Home	CSW	Belfast South
International Meeting Point	Ministry to migrant community	CMI	Belfast South
Derryvolgie Hall	Student Accommodation	CMI	Belfast South
Friendship House	Community Engagement	CMI	Belfast South
Aaron House	Respite and Day Care for adults with severe Learning Disability	CSW	Belfast East
Nightlight	“On-street” ministry	CMI	Various Belfast
Topley Court	Supported living for people with physical disability	CSW	Coleraine and Limavady
Willow Brook	Supported living for people with learning disability	CSW	Coleraine and Limavady
Trinity House	Residential Home	CSW	Coleraine and Limavady
Tritonville Close	Sheltered Housing	CSW	Dublin and Munster
Lawnfield	Residential respite care for adults with physical disability	CSW	Iveagh
River House	Residential Home	CSW	Iveagh
Harold McCauley	Nursing Home	CSW	Omagh
St Andrew’s Bungalows	Sheltered Housing	CSW	Templepatrick

D. CHAPLAINS – HEALTHCARE, EDUCATION, PRISONS AND FORCES

32. Following discussion of a paper on the above it was agreed to recommend to the Council:
- (a) The Moderator should seek to visit on a rota basis full-time (and ideally significant part-time) chaplains working in Healthcare, University and College and Prison settings. This should be included as part of presbytery visits when appropriate, with the rota taking account of this.
 - (b) Additional to this, the Moderator should visit some significant Healthcare, University and College and Prison institutions on a rota basis each year. These visits may or may not be with the visits outlined in point 1 above and again should be included as part of presbytery visits when appropriate, with the rota taking account of this.
 - (c) The Moderator should ideally each year visit a forces chaplain on assignment (either in GB or overseas) and in addition make a formal visit to the UK and Republic of Ireland Armed Forces as appropriate. (On occasions a visit to a chaplain may be combined with a formal visit to Armed Forces.)
 - (d) The Secretary of the Council for Mission in Ireland, along with the relevant Assembly Committee Conveners, shall liaise with the Clerk of Assembly in drawing up the rotas referred to above.

E. GLOBAL MISSION VISITS

33. The Task Group considered a detailed paper and after discussion present the following to the Council:
- (a) **Purpose:** In normal circumstances, the Council for Global Mission, through the Global Mission Secretary, organises one overseas visit for the Moderator during the year and it is recommended that this continue.
 - The primary purpose is to contribute to the developing and strengthening of relationships with global mission partner churches/organisations and to convey a positive message to partners that they are important to PCI.
 - The visit may also contribute to the Global Mission Council's provision of pastoral support for PCI's global mission workers.
 - There is also the potential of stimulating the Moderator's interest in global mission and that of the congregation to which the Moderator returns after their year in office.
 - (b) **Destination:** Normally any location around the world where PCI is involved in a global mission partnership is considered, even where there may be no PCI global mission workers involved. The destination would be decided based on the following, the first of which is especially important:

- An invitation being received from one or more partner churches
- Suggestions by the Global Mission Secretary/Global Mission Partnership Panel
- The views and interests of the Moderator

By way of variation, on at least two occasions Moderators have made the World Development Appeal focused visits facilitated by Tearfund or Christian Aid.

Visits to strengthen historic relationships in the Western world eg USA, Australia, and/or to attend global inter-church conferences or events are usually viewed as being additional and not normally organised by the Global Mission Council.

- (c) **Accompaniment:** Occasionally a Moderator will travel alone but normally Moderators who are married are accompanied by their spouse. On rare occasions, at the Moderator's request, a Moderator's chaplain or an additional family member has been included, usually an older child – this should not be seen as the norm. It is not possible, however, to extend to congregational or team participation. Any accompaniment should not blur or detract from it being the Moderator's visit. It may be necessary for a member of the Global Mission Council, staff team, or former Global Mission Worker to accompany the Moderator in order to facilitate the smooth running of the visit.
- (d) **Timing and Duration:** There is a clear preference to have visits (one to three weeks in duration) taking place in the first half of the Moderator's year although some of the most promising invitations to the Moderator come at short notice and may be timed towards the end of the Moderator's year.
- (e) **Preparation:** The Moderator is required to have a health check, vaccinations, and security training, leading to one or two meetings for orientation to the country, partners and Global Mission Workers.
- (f) **Returning home:** As far as possible, the Moderator will write a blog during the visit and make a short DVD recording. On return there will be a debriefing with the Global Mission Secretary, opportunity to feed back to the Global Mission Council and write for PCI's publications. It is important to remember to promote the United Appeal and to reflect the overseas experience during the remainder of the year of office and beyond.
- (g) **Costs:** Up to now the Incidental Fund has covered the core costs of the Moderator, but moving forward it is recommended that the spouse's core costs be covered as well.

TREVOR D GRIBBEN, Convener

REFORMATION CELEBRATION TASK GROUP

1. The Reformation Celebration Task Group was appointed by the 2016 General Assembly to plan and deliver a celebratory event to mark the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation.
2. The group adopted the title 'Faith at the Crossroads – Rediscovering the Reformation' and planned for three events on consecutive evenings in Abbey Church, Dublin, the Waterside Theatre, Londonderry and Assembly Buildings, Belfast. Dr. Conrad Mbeve, our keynote speaker, from Kabwata Baptist Church in Lusaka brought an international flavour to the event and was living proof of the impact of the Reformation outside of the continent of Europe. He spoke from Romans Ch.3:21-26 from which he drew out the five solas of the Reformation.
3. Each evening included a 'table talk' discussion offering some reflections on the significance of the Reformation for today. The panels included former Moderators, Dr. Trevor Morrow in Dublin, Dr. Rob Craig in Londonderry and Dr. Frank Sellar in Belfast. They were joined by Heather Humphreys TD in Dublin, Noreen Erskine in Londonderry and Belfast, and Dr. Martyn Cowan from Union College who was present on all three evenings.
3. Each celebration was led by Rev. Chris Kennedy, minister of Dun Laoghaire, and the praise was enhanced by Jonathan Rea and members of New Irish Arts. Members of local churches contributed readings and prayers. Jonathan Rea and Chris Kennedy also collaborated on a new hymn for the occasion entitled 'Stand Still'. The words and music were printed in the programme to encourage its use in congregational singing.
4. We were also delighted to have the Moderator of the General Assembly present at all three venues.
5. The first evening on Tuesday, 17 October in Dublin was the day after Storm Ophelia had swept through Ireland closing Dublin airport for a time and shutting down much of the city's public transport system. It was encouraging, therefore, to have 120-140 who braved the elements to be part of the celebration in Abbey Church. These included several public and political representatives. The Waterside Theatre in Londonderry almost reached its capacity with 390 present for the second evening. This was due in no small measure to the work on the ground by the Derry and Donegal Presbytery who actively promoted the event throughout the Northwest. The ground floor of the Assembly Hall in Belfast was full for the final evening with 450-500 in attendance. This means that just under 1000 people participated in the celebration.
6. Each attendee received a souvenir brochure designed by the Creative Production Department and sponsored by Arthur J Gallagher. The brochure included background articles on Martin Luther and some activities for families and children based on 'Luther's Pouches' of faith and love.

7. The Task Group is grateful to all who supported ‘Faith at the Crossroads’. We trust that for all who were present it was a fitting way in which to mark a very significant anniversary and, in the words of the celebratory hymn, to affirm confidently:

Here we stand, here we’ll stay,

Christ is enough now and always.

DAVID JOHNSTON, Convener

HISTORIAL ARCHIVING TASK GROUP

1. The Historical Archiving Task Group has met once since the last General Assembly – a further meeting was arranged, but due to weather conditions, did not reach a quorum.
2. **Strong Room.** Most of the material in the Strong Room which is appropriate to transfer to the care of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland (PHSI) has been so transferred.
3. **Board and Committee records:** Space has been made in one of the store rooms on the first floor near the Minor Hall to allow the various departments in Assembly Buildings to deposit material under three headings:
 - (a) Minutes and other official documentation which it is necessary to preserve.
 - (b) Documentation and artefacts which may be of interest to the PHSI, which will be given the option of receiving them.
 - (c) Items for disposal.
4. A start has been made with material held by the Congregational Life and Witness and the General Secretary’s Departments. It is evident that, in the absence of someone specifically appointed to the task, it will be a lengthy time-consuming exercise fitted in round the normal duties of staff.
5. **GDPR:** The Task Group is aware of the work of the GDPR Task Group and that some of that will involve the formulation of a retention policy for personal data. This will likely impact the work of this Task Group and may turn out to subsume a major part of it.

JIM STOTHERS, Convener

GENERAL COUNCIL

AD-HOC BUSINESS

1. The General Council, in line with its remit to co-ordinate and facilitate the general work of the Church, and on occasions to act on behalf of the General Assembly, transacted a number of items of business during the past year.

Issuing of calls under Par 272(9) of the Code (for details see the report of the Council for Mission in Ireland)

2. Since the last meeting of the General Assembly, the Council facilitated the work of the Council for Mission in Ireland by issuing calls to Prison, Forces and University Chaplains.

Healthcare Chaplaincy (for details see the report of the Council for Mission in Ireland)

3. At the request of the Council for Mission in Ireland, and acting on behalf of the General Assembly under Par 272(3) of the Code, the Council affirmed the submission of the Healthcare, Prisons and Forces Chaplaincy Committee as being the position of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, by passing the following resolution:

That the General Council expresses its concern to the Northern Health and Social Care Trust at the proposed formalising of a generic model of chaplaincy across the Trust's sites, and affirms the detailed consultation submission of the Healthcare, Prisons and Forces Chaplaincy Committee to the Trust, outlining the general and specific concerns, as the position of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on this matter.

Transfer of Peacehaven Trust to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (for details see the report of the Council for Social Witness)

4. The General Council noted that the previously agreed business and assets transfer of the Peacehaven company was not possible. Therefore, at the request of the Council for Social Witness, and noting the approval in principle of the General Assembly Trustees, the General Council acted on behalf of the General Assembly under Par 272(3) of the Code and agreed the following two resolutions:
 - (a) That the General Council authorise the takeover of Peacehaven Trust Ltd, with the General Assembly Trustees becoming the sole member, as outlined in the report, subject to the conditions set by the Trustees and any other legal requirements as advised by the General Assembly Solicitor.
 - (b) That the Business and Finance Panel of the Council for Social Witness, in consultation with the Clerk of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Solicitor, be authorised to take the steps necessary to allow the takeover to proceed.

Republic of Ireland Referendum on the 8th Amendment (for details see the report of the Council for Public Affairs)

5. At the request of the Council for Public Affairs, the General Council acted on behalf of the General Assembly under Par 272(3) of the Code, to agree that the Presbyterian Church in Ireland support the retention of the Eighth Amendment in the referendum debate. The Council further agreed the recommendation that a Task Group be established by the most appropriate Council of the Church to review and develop our pastoral care for women and families affected by pregnancy crisis, pregnancy loss, the diagnosis of a life-limiting condition and other related circumstances. This should include support for those caring for children and young people with disabilities.

Congregational Contacts used by the General Assembly and its Councils

6. At the time of restructuring the Structures Panel recommended that the number of congregational contacts used by the General Assembly and its Councils be minimised. This was largely because of the proliferation of ‘agents’ that congregations were being asked to appoint and the near impossibility of keeping such contact lists up to date.
7. It was envisaged that in addition to the Minister, Clerk of Session, Treasurer and Designated Person, each congregation would have one ‘Main Contact Person’. It would be the duty of that person to forward on all of the e-mails from the General Assembly’s Councils to the relevant person or persons in their congregation. As a result the up to date knowledge about the current leaders of different areas of a congregation’s life would be held at congregational level and therefore always be accurate. It was envisaged that, with the exception of communications specifically for the office-bearers named above, all communications would be sent electronically to the ‘Main Contact Person’ in each congregation, who would need to be efficient both in the use of e-mail and in administration. This person could of course be the Clerk of Session, or in extremis the Minister, but it would probably be preferable that it was a different person with this dedicated role.
8. Recognising the important work of the GDPR Task Group, and the need to minimise data held centrally by PCI, the General Council set up a small Task Group to carry forward this, as yet unimplemented, recommendation of the Structures Panel. The Task Group was given authority to make any necessary minor amendments to the proposals outlined above, following consultations with Council Secretaries and any other relevant office-bearers. However, the Council agreed that it was important that the number of categories of congregational contacts did not proliferate, meaning a return to the current problems. The Task Group was also asked to oversee any other necessary streamlining of the PCI Central Database, including the updating of all information held, particularly with regard to the requirements of GDPR.

New Structure of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness

9. In its report to the 2017 General Assembly, the Council for Congregational Life and Witness (CCLW) outlined the difficulties emerging from the complex structure of Committees, Panels, Task Groups and Organising Groups involved in delivering its remit. A resolution agreed by the 2017 Assembly authorised the Council to engage with the General Council to reflect on a structure which best ensures both appropriate accountability and ability to deliver its remit.
10. During the past year CCLW engaged external input to shape organisational design, carefully considered the views of Council members, discussed proposals with present Committee Conveners and staff, and engaged with the General Council. As a result the new structures, as outlined in the Appendix, were given overwhelming support by CCLW and the General Council in response passed the following two resolutions:
 - (a) That the General Council support the proposed Committee streamlining for the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, agreeing that it will better facilitate both the delivery of the General Assembly's remit to that Council and also the necessary oversight of that delivery;
 - (b) That the General Council transmit the report to the 2018 General Assembly, with the recommendation that the new structures for the Council for Congregational Life and Witness become operative from the 2019 General Assembly.

PROPOSED COMMITTEE STREAMLINING COUNCIL FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS

Background**Presenting issue**

1. The Council for Congregational Life and Witness has a wide remit. Its formation has helpfully consolidated overall resourcing of the primary areas of congregational ministry and mission. However, the multiplicity of committees is creating an overall output that is swamping congregations with too many messages and resources. The present committee structure does not lend itself to streamlining outputs, or facilitate the kind of coordination, collaboration and prioritisation that will enable strategic development to coalesce around the Council's central theme of Fruitful Congregations.

Response: Resolution passed by the General Assembly 2017

2. That the General Assembly encourage the Council for Congregational Life and Witness to engage with the General Council to:
 - (a) reflect on the structure of Committees, Panels, Task Groups and Organising Groups that best ensures appropriate accountability and ability to deliver its remit to envision, equip and enable congregations for their life and witness.

Proposal: Streamlining of committee structure

3. **What remains the same?**
 - (a) Commitment to the principles of accountability, communication and engagement
 - (b) The Council's remit and commitment to ensure adequate resourcing in all areas for which it is responsible
 - (c) Specific input to ensure the continuing integration of Children, Youth and Family, and Women's ministries into the overall agenda of congregational life and witness
 - (d) Delivery mechanisms in which Task Groups remain responsible for delivery of major pieces of work and Organising Groups for the delivery of key Council events. Both groups reporting directly to the Council or relevant Committee
 - (e) The numbers of Council members and breakdown of Presbytery Direct Nominees and Nominations Committee Nominees
 - (f) Council staffing.
4. **What are the proposed changes to Committee structure?**
 - (a) That the present six thematic General Assembly Committees (Leadership, Discipleship, Worship, Pastoral Care, Outreach and Global Mission Involvement) are reduced to two - 'Congregational Life' (with a remit for development of Leadership, Discipleship, Worship, and Pastoral Care, with the addition of congregational prayer) and 'Congregational Witness' (with a remit for development of Evangelism, Community Witness, Global Mission Involvement and also incorporating Good Relations)
 - (b) That the existing General Assembly Committees for Youth, Children's and Family Strategy and Coordination and Women's Ministry Strategy and Coordination be re-designated as Panels, but retain their existing remit
 - (c) That a Programme, Finance and Coordination Committee be formed as a crucial element of the structure to prepare and provide Council with options from which to devise a more streamlined, medium term, strategy and framework for delivery of envisioning, equipping and enabling for the life and witness of congregations.

Designated roles and responsibilities of various bodies within the proposed structure

5. **Two Thematic Committees – Congregational Life Committee and Congregational Witness Committee with the roles of:**
 - (a) receiving and interpreting feedback from congregations and presbyteries to feed it forward into draft strategy agendas;
 - (b) making recommendations to the Programme, Finance and Coordination Committee for medium term Council Programme setting out proposals for a framework of priorities, strategy and output in the areas of their remits;
 - (c) overseeing delivery of strategy and output by Task and Organising Groups.
6. **Programme, Finance and Coordination Committee with the roles of:**
 - (a) receiving recommendations from the two Thematic Committees for the formation of an overall Council Programme;
 - (b) receiving specific input from Women’s Ministry and Children’s, Youth and Family Panels;
 - (c) overseeing and preparing recommendations for Council which ensure balanced output across all areas of the Council’s remit;
 - (d) overseeing and preparing recommendations for Council which streamline and create convergence between outputs to ensure Council is working within what it can deliver and what congregations are reasonably able to receive and absorb in any given period;
 - (e) compiling and tabling recommendations for an overall priorities and strategy paper for Council consideration (may include options);
 - (f) overseeing expenditure of United Appeal allocation;
 - (g) taking limited routine decisions where necessary between Council meetings and transacting any business specifically delegated to it, including allocating remits given by the General Assembly.
7. **Women’s Ministry Panel and Children’s, Youth and Family Panel with the following roles:**
 - (a) Women’s Ministry Panel:
 - (i) overseeing and giving approval to items relating to Presbyterian Women;
 - (ii) providing input to the three Council Committees on priorities, strategy and output relating to women’s ministry and integrating their specialism into the Council agenda where appropriate.

- (b) Children’s, Youth and Family Panel:
 - (i) providing input to the three Council Committees on priorities, strategy and output relating to children’s, youth and family ministry and integrating their specialism into the Council agenda where appropriate.
 - (c) The Council, fulfilling the following remit:
 - (i) receiving recommendations and/or options from the Programme, Finance and Coordination Committee for overall three year Council programme;
 - (ii) debating, deciding and recommending Council priorities, strategy and programme to the General Assembly;
 - (iii) overseeing other items of Council business and monitoring overall delivery of Council programme.
8. **A series of Task and Organising Groups as required with the roles of:**
- (a) assuming direct responsibility for delivery of the Council Programme;
 - (b) reporting on delivery to the appropriate body from which their work originated.

Pruning for greater fruitfulness

“Every branch that does bear fruit he prunes that it will be even more fruitful” John 15:2.

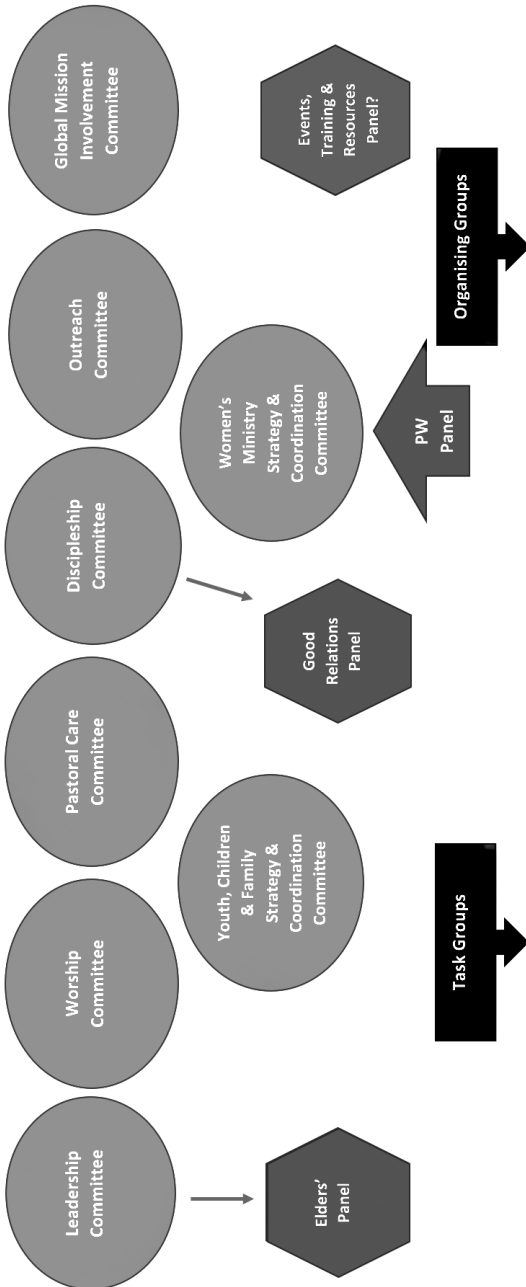
- 9. The aim of the proposed alternative is to ensure increasing fruitfulness in the Council’s ministry in support of the life and witness of congregations.
- 10. The present committee structure ensures ‘a place for everything’. It has been effective in enabling the transition of the various elements which were distributed widely in the previous Board structure into one Council aimed at resourcing congregational life and witness. However, by putting ‘everything in its own place’ it perpetuates silos, impedes coordination and results in unnecessary duplication of key messages to congregations.
- 11. The alternative proposal aims to enable the striking of a crucial balance. Over any medium term period, it will ensure availability of core resourcing across all areas of the Council’s responsibility. It will also enable development and delivery of output around the Fruitful Congregations theme in a more coordinated way, better streamline messages and tailor outputs to respond to the emerging needs of congregations in ways which correspond to the realities of the capacities, pace and rhythms of church life.

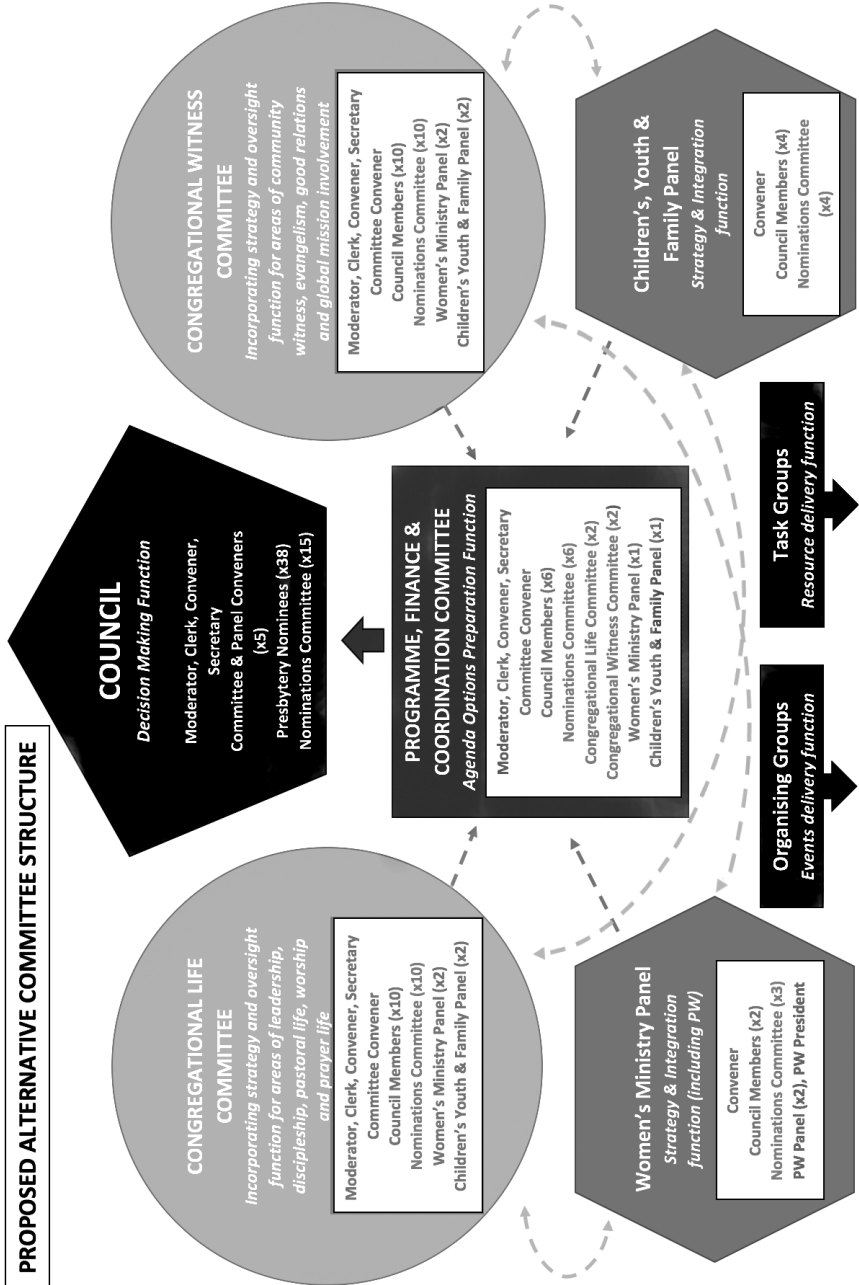
Resolution passed by the Council for Congregational Life and Witness at its meeting on 27th February 2018:

That the Council for Congregational Life and Witness support the proposed Committee streamlining to better facilitate both the delivery of the General Assembly's remit to the Council and also the necessary oversight of that delivery.

PRESENT COMMITTEE STRUCTURE
Each Committee is made up of:
 Moderator, Clerk, Convener, Secretary
 Committee Convener
 Council Members (x4)
 Nominations Committee (x4)

COUNCIL
 Moderator, Clerk, Convener,
 Secretary
 Committee & Panel Conveners
 & PW President (x11)
 Presbytery Nominees (x38)
 Nominations Committee (x15)





RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions – General Assembly Business Committee (Initial Section)

10.30am Tuesday morning:

1. That the Draft Order of Business for the 2018 General Assembly be approved.
2. That the ‘Guide to Assembly Procedure’ (yellow pages) be approved with the appropriate General Assembly Standing Orders suspended, when necessary, to facilitate alternative presentations etc.
3. That at the 2018 General Assembly, permission be granted, where appropriate, to consolidate resolutions relating to Overtures; and that if a written request from ten or more members of Assembly is lodged with the Clerk before the time scheduled for debate on the consolidated resolution(s) relating to Overtures, then the item(s) specified in the written request will be removed from the consolidated resolution(s) and considered as separate resolution(s).
4. That a grant of £20,000 be made from the Incidental Fund to the Arrangements Panel of the General Assembly Business Committee.
5. That the Right Rev Dr Charles Mr McMullen and his wife be appointed to attend the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Wales in July 2018.
6. That the Initial Report of the General Assembly Business Committee be received.

Resolutions - General Council

(Section 1 – 2.30pm Tuesday afternoon)

7. That for 2018, the Assessment Rates, along with the related allocation of funds, be as set out in Support Services Appendix 1 and that the rate of assessment for the Pension Fund be set at 24% of stipend paid in the year.
8. That the 2018 budgeted expenditure of the Incidental Fund be as set out in Support Services Appendix 2.
9. That under Par 223(3) of the Code, leave is given to the pre-65 retirement of the Rev Robert Bell (Ballyclare).
10. That the United Appeal for 2019 be as set out on the Schedules to the report of the United Appeal Committee.
11. That the General Assembly encourage all Congregations to make use of the available United Appeal for Mission promotional materials and to mark the first Sunday in March (or other suitable Sunday) as United Appeal for Mission Sunday.

12. That the General Assembly agree that the Guysmere Centre be sold at the appropriate time.
13. That General Assembly direct that, once all financial liabilities are settled, steps be taken to establish a 'Guysmere Fund' under the control of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, to support ministry, mission and outreach with an emphasis where possible on residential ministry amongst young people and young adults.
14. That the General Council be authorised to oversee the sale of the Guysmere Centre and the drawing up of the terms of the "Guysmere Fund", in consultation with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness.
15. That Section 1 of the Report of the General Council (with the exception of the General Assembly Business Committee) be received.

Resolutions - General Council

(Section 2 – 3.30pm Wednesday afternoon)

16. That, under Par 226(a) of the Code, the Rev Alexander Shaw Thompson be enrolled as Minister Emeritus of the congregation of First Dromara.
17. That, under Par 226(a) of the Code, the Rev Robert James McCullough be enrolled as Minister Emeritus of the congregations of Woodburn and Loughmorne.
18. That the General Assembly agree that Licentiates should be permitted to be called to a part-time ministry and instruct the Linkage Commission to change its guidelines accordingly.
19. That Section 2 of the Report of the General Council be received.

Resolutions - General Council

(Section 3 – 4.30pm Wednesday afternoon)

20. That appropriate training be offered to Kirk Sessions on the theology and practice of the Church's understanding of 'a credible profession of faith' and the pastoral guidelines on homosexuality.
21. That in light of the rapid change in society, both north and south of the border, the following statement be issued by the Press Officer on behalf of the General Council at appropriate times relating to civic events in either jurisdiction:
 - (a) The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as a witness to Christ, affirms the God-given dignity of all people, from all faiths and none, on account of their bearing God's image. Furthermore, we affirm our solidarity with all our neighbours in our common life together. However, as a Church committed to the Lordship of Christ, we

- decline to participate in interfaith worship or to acknowledge the ultimate claim of any state to control religious worship.
- (b) The Presbyterian Church in Ireland recognises that her leaders and members will consider participation in sequential multi-faith civic events where there may be opportunities to read the Bible, speak about God's grace in Christ or pray for people in need. However, out of concern for God's glory and the good of our neighbour, we decline to participate in non-trinitarian interfaith worship.
22. That the Council for Public Affairs be encouraged to develop a formal relationship with Evangelical Alliance NI, possibly in a similar manner to the formal relationship that once existed between the former Board of Mission in Ireland and Evangelical Alliance (NI).
23. That the Church Relations Committee be asked to keep the issue of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's possible membership of World Reformed Fellowship on its agenda.
24. That during the ensuing year the Church Relations Committee consider further the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's continued membership of the Council of European Churches and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe, having received reports from PCI delegates to both General Assemblies, and report with recommendations to the 2019 General Assembly.
25. That the Presbyterian Church in Ireland [**one option to be selected**]:
- (a) should no longer accept invitations to the Moderator of the General Assembly, or any other formal delegation, to attend the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church and no longer issue invitations to those two denominations to attend the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
- (b) should resume accepting invitations for the Moderator of the General Assembly to attend the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and should continue to accept such invitations from the United Reformed Church.
26. That where there are areas in which the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Church of Scotland could collaborate together for the mutual benefit of both (through their respective Councils, Committees and Departments), then such collaboration should continue or could be considered.
27. That future natural areas of collaboration with the United Reformed Church (through respective Councils, Committees and Departments), which would be for the mutual benefit of both denominations, could be considered.
28. That Section 3 of the Report of the General Council be received.

Resolutions - General Council**(Section 4 – 8.00pm Thursday evening)**

29. That the General Assembly authorise the General Council to bring in any necessary guidelines and interim regulations (prior to changes to the Code at a subsequent Assembly) relating to the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation at congregational, presbytery and General Assembly level.
30. That all presbyteries and General Assembly councils should note and act upon the following decisions of the General Council in relation to engagement:
 - (a) That each council should offer an orientation meeting with representatives from Presbytery.
 - (b) That once a year Clerks of Presbytery should meet together with the Clerk and Deputy Clerk of Assembly and with council convenors and secretaries to hear from each other and discuss possible priorities and events for the year(s) ahead.
 - (c) That presbyteries should seek every opportunity to work with councils in organising training and other events.
 - (d) That presbyteries should seek to organise their business in such a way as to allow SPACE for the five elements specified in the report of the Engagement and Consultations Task Group (see pages 104-107) and that one presbytery be chosen by the Task Group to pilot this framework over the next year.
 - (e) That presbyteries should endeavour to be more proactive in their engagement with the Linkage Commission prior to and during vacancies.
31. That the General Assembly instruct all presbyteries to consider the proposal to merge the 19 Presbytery Education Boards and form one, or if necessary two, holding trustee bodies for those congregations in the General Assembly not wishing to appoint three or more individual voting members as named trustees to receive and hold their property, and report to the Convener of the Holding Trustee Task Group by 30th November 2018.
32. That Section 4 of the Report of the General Council be received.

Resolutions - General Council**(Section 5 – Friday morning, approx. 10.00am)**

33. That the following resignations be accepted (or noted) and appointments made:
 - (a) the resignation of the Rev WJ Henry as Convener of the Linkage Commission, that he be thanked for his services, and that Mr James Livingstone be appointed in his place.

- (b) the resignation of the Very Rev Dr HA Dunlop as Convener of the Union Theological College Management Committee, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Very Rev Dr IJ Patterson be appointed in his place.
 - (c) the resignation of the Rev CW Megaw as Convener of the Specialist Services Committee, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Rev JP Stanbridge be appointed in his place.
 - (d) the resignation of the Rev Dr KP Meyer as Convener of the World Development Committee, that she be thanked for her services, and that the Rev FMA Forbes be appointed in her place.
 - (e) the resignation of the Very Rev Dr RL Craig as Convener of the General Council, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Very Rev Dr JNI McNeely be appointed in his place.
 - (f) the resignation of Mr John Hunter, CB, as Convener of the Support Services Committee, that he be thanked for his services, and that Mr David Thomson be appointed in his place.
 - (g) the resignation of the Rev DJ Irvine as Convener of the United Appeal Committee on 2nd February 2018 be noted, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Rev MR Catney be appointed in his place.
 - (h) the resignation of the Rev JN Seawright as Convener of the Older People's Services Committee, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Rev JNE Reid be appointed in his place.
34. That the nominations to the General Assembly Commissions, Councils and Committees (as tabled by the Nominations Committee) be approved.
35. That the General Assembly to approve that the term of service for Council and Committee members be four years from the Assembly of appointment, rather than for the remainder of a general four year term.
36. That in connection with Special Assemblies:
- (a) That the suggestion of an interim, follow up event to the 2017 Special Assembly should not be pursued.
 - (b) That in early 2021, a Task Group, comprised primarily of members of the Priorities Committee and the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, be formed to prayerfully discern if there is an emerging theme for a residential Special Assembly to be held in 2024.
 - (c) That should such a theme obviously present itself to the Task Group, that a recommendation be brought to the 2021 General Assembly for a Special Assembly in August 2024 and suitable arrangements for delivery of such an event be set in place.
 - (d) That if such a theme does not obviously present itself to the Task Group, that no Special Assembly be held in 2024, but that the matter of future Special Assemblies, or alternatives, be considered by the General Council.

37. That the General Assembly agree that the new structures for the Council for Congregational Life and Witness (see pages 136-142) become operative from the 2019 General Assembly.
38. That Section 5 of the Report of the General Council be received.

Resolutions – General Assembly Business Committee (Final Report) – approx. 1.00pm on Friday

To be tabled during the General Assembly.

AD-HOC OVERTURES

A. GENERAL

1. **Purpose** – to provide a second option for a body to which congregational property may be transferred (to facilitate the receipt of grant aid etc) while ensuring that the body (in this case a company limited by guarantee) remains under the ultimate control of the Kirk Session (by ensuring that the members of the Company and its directors have to be members of Kirk Session, and the power to appoint new directors lies solely with Kirk Session) Clause (a)(ii) is the new clause.

Anent Par 53 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 53 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

53. Appointment of Trustees and Declarations of Trust. Every congregation shall ensure that:

- (a) congregational trustees are or have been appointed to receive and hold the property of the congregation upon trust for the congregation and subject to its directions so far as those directions comply with the terms of such trust and with this Code save that, but subject to the provisions of paragraph 57(5), congregational property may be transferred to:
 - (i) trustees (who shall be not less than three voting members of the congregation) for a separate body set up by, under the jurisdiction of, and accountable to the Kirk Session of the congregation; or
 - (ii) to a company limited by guarantee of which the members and directors must at all times be members of the Kirk Session of the congregation and in respect of which the powers of appointing and removing directors shall at all times rest with the members of the Kirk Session of the congregation; and in either case.
- (b) the terms of such trust are set forth in a deed or deeds and, if drawn after the commencement of this Code, are in conformity with the provisions of the relevant rules.

2. **Purpose** – to correct drafting errors

Anent Par 57 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 57 of the Code, sub-paragraphs (7) and (8) be deleted, and the following substituted in their place:

- (7) In all situations where augmentation or incremental grant is being paid to the minister of a congregation the Presbytery shall consult

with the Linkage Commission and obtain the Commission's consent before authorising any project under sub-paragraph (6) above.

- (8) Notice of the convening of a meeting of the congregation for the purpose of giving an approval required under sub-paragraphs (2) or (6) or paragraph 46(f) shall be given from the pulpit on the two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting.

Anent Par 273(5)(d)(iii)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 273(5)(d)(iii) of the Code, the words "sub-paragraph (5)(c)(ii)" be deleted and the words "sub-paragraph (5)(d)(ii)" substituted in their place.

3. **Purpose** – to include new Consultation process and allow for Visitations in special circumstances

Anent Par 70(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 70(b) of the Code be deleted, and the following substituted in its place:

- (b) hold consultations with, and visitations of, congregations. (*See Pars 246-247*).

Anent Chapter XV, Section IV, Pars 246-251

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Chapter XV, Section IV, Pars 246-251 of the Code be deleted, and the following substituted in their place:

SECTION IV – CONSULTATIONS WITH AND VISITATIONS OF CONGREGATIONS

246. (1) Each congregation, Church Extension charge and Church Plant shall engage in an official Consultation with Presbytery at least once in ten years.
- (2) A consultation is a process by which Presbytery enquires into the life of a congregation in order to discover:
- encouragements to celebrate, for the edification of the congregation and to inspire the rest of Presbytery;
 - challenges faced by the congregation, so that Kirk Session can be directed and equipped to deal with the most pressing issues;
 - any concerns that Kirk Session may be struggling to deal with, requiring the intervention of Presbytery.

- (3) Normally there should not be a consultation with a congregation until at least two years after the installation or induction of the lead minister.
 - (4) Resources and Guidance for consultations shall be authorised from time to time by the General Council.
247. (1) A visitation of a congregation, Church Extension charge or Church Plant may also be held when the Presbytery considers it to be necessary.
- (2) The purpose of a visitation of a congregation by Presbytery is to enquire into particular matters affecting the congregation.
 - (3) A visitation should normally be carried out by a commission of Presbytery, the membership to be chosen taking account of the nature of the circumstances. If necessary to achieve appropriate representation, communicant members from congregations within the bounds of the Presbytery may be added on a 'sit and deliberate' basis.
 - (4) The essential stages in visitation are: Notification, Inquiry, Finding and Report. The form the visitation takes will be determined by Presbytery according to the specific circumstances. Authorised consultation resources may be used after appropriate adaptation.
 - (5) Congregations shall be given formal notice by Presbytery of the intended visitation and the proposed procedures being followed. This shall be read to the congregation on a convenient Sunday, with an invitation to members to forward anything which they wish to bring to the Presbytery's attention concerning the matters being inquired into.
 - (6) With the Presbytery's notice there shall be sent any appropriate documentation for completion by relevant parties and any request for documentation the Presbytery wishes to examine.
 - (7) As part of the inquiry, meetings may be held separately and privately with relevant parties. A public meeting or meetings open to all members of the congregation (including adherents) should also normally be held. Such meetings may include any of these elements: reports, questions, discussion. The Presbytery may also address the congregation on specific matters.
 - (8) Subsequent to the visitation the Presbytery shall reach an official finding. The finding shall first be read in private to any parties that the Presbytery deems appropriate. Unless there is an appeal, the finding as adopted shall be published by being read to the congregation on a convenient Sunday by a ministerial member of Presbytery, who shall also address the congregation as appropriate to the circumstances. If the visitation has been conducted by a commission, the reading of the finding should not be delayed to allow for reporting to Presbytery.

- (9) A minute of the procedure followed and the finding adopted shall be inserted in the Presbytery minute book; and a copy of the finding shall be furnished to the Kirk Session for retention in its minute book.
- (10) Within twelve months after the visitation of a congregation, the Presbytery shall require the minister or representative elder to report on how far the instructions and/or recommendations of Presbytery have been carried out.
- (11) In case of neglect to give effect to its instructions and/or recommendations, or at the desire of the minister or representative elder, the Presbytery shall again send a member to address the congregation; or it shall take such other action as it sees fit.

Pars 248-251 deleted

- 3.(a) **Purpose** – The following are necessary changes consequent on the above provisions concerning consultations and visitations.

Anent Par 224(2)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 224(2)(a) of the Code, the word “special” be deleted.

Anent Code Par 256(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 256(2) of the Code, the words “visitation of” be deleted and the words “consultation with” substituted in their place.

Anent Code Par 260(g) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 260(g) of the Code, the word “visited” be deleted and the words “consulted or visited” substituted in their place.

Anent Code Par 273(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 273(2) of the Code, the words “the visitation of” be deleted and the words “a consultation with or visitation of” substituted in their place.

Anent Code Par 306(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 306(1) of the Code, the word “visitations” be deleted and the word “consultations” substituted in its place.

4. **Purpose** – to enable Army and other Service Chaplains and Global Mission Workers (who by nature of their sphere of service were usually unable to attend Presbytery meetings), to continue as full members of Presbytery without having to be Charity Trustees.

Anent Par 70(d) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 70(d) of the Code be deleted, and the following substituted in its place:

- (d) act as charity trustees and be responsible for its compliance with the requirements of charities legislation in Northern Ireland and/or the Republic of Ireland as appropriate, save that ministers or elders who come within paragraph 61(c) of this Code, for so long as they continue to serve in a role specified in that paragraph, shall not be required to act as charity trustees for the Presbytery but shall nevertheless remain members of the Presbytery.
5. **Purpose** – to remove from the Presbytery the right to appeal to the General Assembly against a decision of the Council for Training in Ministry not to accept a candidate for the office of deaconess, in conformity with the decision to remove that right concerning the acceptance of students for the ministry etc, at the 2017 General Assembly by the amendment in that year of Code Par 146(1)(c).

Anent Par 146(1)(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 146(1)(c) of the Code, the words “students for the ministry” be deleted, and the words “students for the ministry, candidates for the office of deaconess” substituted in their place.

6. **Purpose** – to remove from this section of the Code a reference to a Presbytery right to appeal to the General Assembly against a decision of the Council for Training in Ministry not to nominate a student for the ministry in conformity with decision to remove that right in 2017 by the amendment to Code Par 146(1)(c).

Anent Par 215(6) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 215(6) of the Code be deleted and subsequent sub-paragraphs renumbered.

7. **Purpose** – to change the dates for submission of annual financial returns from congregations from February/March to April/May and from Presbyteries from 10th March to 10th May.

Anent Par 258(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 258(c) of the Code be deleted, and the following substituted in its place:

- (c) The Statistical Sheets when so completed shall:
 - (i) be presented to the Presbyteries at their stated meetings in April or May each year, to be examined and certified by them; and
 - (ii) when so certified, be forwarded by the Clerks of Presbyteries to the Financial Secretary, Assembly Buildings, not later than 10th May.

8. **Purpose** – to allow for a minister near to retirement who is loosed from his/her charge, where there is no fault (e.g. under Code Par 318(3)(c)), to be made Minister Emeritus and to clarify eligibility for a special arrangement under Par 226.

Anent Par 226 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 226 of the Code be deleted, and the following substituted in its place:

226. (a) When a minister of a congregation or congregations, within five years of his or her normal retirement date, instead of retiring in the usual way either:
- (i) voluntarily resigns the pastoral charge on account of old age, infirmity, sickness or other cause recognised as adequate by the Presbytery, and the resignation has been accepted by Presbytery; or
 - (ii) is loosed under the terms of Par 318(3)(c);
that minister may, if the Presbytery so propose and the Assembly decide, be enrolled as Minister Emeritus of the congregation; and shall in virtue of such enrolment be a member of the superior courts of the Church. As such that minister shall continue under the jurisdiction of Presbytery and shall be subject to the provisions of these rules regarding the acceptance of paid appointments applying to ministers in active duty or ministers without charge.
- (b) in either case there shall be no entitlement to a retiring allowance from Assembly funds, before qualifying normally, nor shall there be any entitlement to an allowance for a temporary period, unless where a special arrangement is made by the Linkage Commission after consultation with the Judicial Commission.

Anent Par 318(3)(d) of the Code

It is hereby overtured that Par 318(3)(d) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(3)(d) to make appropriate arrangements for the minister. In so acting, the Linkage Commission shall have power to make a special arrangement in accordance with the terms of Par 226(b).

9. **Purpose** – to allow for the possibility of the appointment of the Education Board of the Presbytery as congregational trustee in the Notice to the Congregation.

Anent Appendix 6

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Appendix 6, subparagraph C of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

C: For a Meeting to Appoint new Trustees

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the congregation of will be held (as may be decided) on Sunday, the of, in the Church immediately after the close of public worship, OR on, the of, at the hour of in when an appointment of new trustees will be made by the members of the congregation duly qualified to vote at the election of the Minister; and that no person but a member of the congregation is eligible for such appointment to office, save that the Education Board of the Presbytery may be so appointed.

B. LINKAGE COMMISSION

10. **Purpose** – to reduce the period when salary etc is paid after the termination of an appointment under reviewable tenure from 18 months after notice is given to 12 months maximum.

Anent Par 273(5)(d)(v) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 273(5)(d)(v) of the Code, the words “twelve months” be deleted and the words “twelve months from the date when notice of termination is given” substituted in their place.

C. COUNCIL FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS

11. **Purpose** – to incorporate the changed wording of the PW Constitution under the new structures into the Code.

Anent Par 308 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 308 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

308. (1) **Name:** The name of the organisation shall be *Presbyterian Women*, incorporating the former *Presbyterian Women's Association* and the former *Young Women's Groups*, and may also be referred to as PW.

(2) **Motto:** The motto of *Presbyterian Women* shall be: Living for Jesus

(3) **Mission Statement and Aims:**

Presbyterian Women encourages women to become disciples of Christ.

Presbyterian Women aims to highlight the need for –

- (i) Love and unity
- (ii) Obedience to God
- (iii) Christian living and spiritual maturity
- (iv) Service using gifts, time and money
- (v) Local and global mission

(4) **PW Groups:**

Where possible a group shall be formed in each congregation to bring together women at a congregational level, encourage them to become disciples of Jesus Christ and work to fulfil the aims of *Presbyterian Women*. Each group shall operate under the authority of the Kirk Session. Stated meetings shall be held and membership shall be open to all women who accept the aims of *Presbyterian Women*.

(5) **PW LINK (Living, Inspiring and Nurturing for the Kingdom):**

There shall be in each Presbytery a PW Committee known as the PW LINK to bring together members of *Presbyterian Women*.

Constituent members:

Three members from each PW Group, at least one of whom should be an Office Bearer. Each member to serve for three years, unless:

- (i) elected to serve on the PW Forum or the PW LINK Planning Committee Subgroup, or
- (ii) appointed to represent *Presbyterian Women* at the General Assembly or Presbytery.

In these circumstances membership of the PW LINK should be extended until the additional responsibilities end.

(6) **PW Forum:**

There shall be a PW Forum to bring together PW LINK representatives at a central level.

The PW Forum shall be made up of:

- (a) members of the PW Panel and its Subgroups;
- (b) five representatives from each PW LINK:
 - (i) the three serving PW LINK Office Bearers i.e. Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer; and
 - (ii) two others from each PW LINK, appointed to attend for 3 years.

Others may also be invited to attend, as appropriate.

(7) **PW Panel**

The decision-making body of the Organisation shall be a PW Panel under the Women's Strategy and Coordination Committee (WSCC).

Constituent members:

- (a) Council Convener, Council Secretary, Convener of WSCC, PW President, PW Home Vice President, PW Overseas Vice President;
- (b) Two members drawn from the membership of the WSCC;
- (c) Seven members drawn from a PW Volunteer Bank into which members' names were submitted.

The Women's Ministry and PW Development Officer, the PW Support Officer and the Moderator's wife shall be invited to sit and deliberate.

Voting members will serve a maximum of four years and can serve two consecutive terms.

- (8) **Finance:** The financial year of PW shall end on 31st December. A statement of income and expenditure shall be submitted to the Annual Meeting of *Presbyterian Women*. A report and statement of annual accounts shall be submitted to the PW Panel, the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, the General Assembly and, if appropriate, other relevant Councils. Each PW Group will receive a copy of an Annual Report including a Financial Supplement.

MEMORIALS TRANSMITTED

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to meet in Belfast on 4th June 2018.

The memorial of the Presbytery of Tyrone respectfully showeth:

That the Rev Tom Conway will be released from his charge on 16th June 2018 on grounds of ill health. That while occupational health advise he is not able to continue as a minister in a pastoral charge they do advise that he is well enough to continue as Clerk of Presbytery. However, when the Rev Tom Conway becomes a minister without charge, and ceases to be a full member of Presbytery, he would normally be unable to continue as Clerk. It is nevertheless the Presbytery's desire that if possible he remains Clerk of Presbytery, at the pleasure of the Presbytery.

The Presbytery therefore respectfully ask the General Assembly to facilitate this by determining that Rev Tom Conway, on his resignation from his charge, shall continue as a member of the Presbytery under Code Par 61(j), so long as he remains in post as Clerk of Presbytery.

The Presbytery note that this would not change the status of Rev Tom Conway as a minister without charge, but it would make him ex officio a member of the General Assembly, under Code Par 97(h)(ii), so long as he remains in post as Clerk of Presbytery.

Adopted by the Presbytery of Tyrone at its meeting in First Cookstown on Tuesday, 6th March 2018.

REV JOHN MULLAN, Moderator
REV DR JONATHAN CURRY, Acting Clerk

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to meet in Belfast on 4th June 2018.

The Memorial of the Presbytery of Templepatrick, respectfully showeth:

That in Par 72 (e) The Code states that the Presbytery shall, in accordance with rules:

“commission and appoint deaconesses, senior lecturers, auxiliary ministers, lay agents and missionaries who have been called by an authorised body in the Church.”

That in Par 260 The Code further states that:

“Each Presbytery shall report annually to the General Assembly

- (a) the name of its Moderator;
- (b) the names of ministers who, since its last annual report, have died, been designated Minister Emeritus (Released), retired from active duty, resigned their charges, or have been installed, inducted, ordained or licensed by Presbytery, with the respective dates;
- (c) the names of ministers without charge or licentiates under the care of the Presbytery, or who have been furnished with credentials, with the respective dates;
- (d) the names of ministers who, since its last annual report, have resigned the office of the ministry, or have been suspended or deposed, or have been declared to be no longer ministers of the Church; and of licentiates who have ceased serving an assistantship under Par 219A, or from whom licence has been withdrawn;
- (e) the names of candidates for the ministry placed under its care together with the name of any student whose candidature has been terminated during the year;
- (f) the names of congregations which have been constituted by order of the General Assembly; and the names of congregations which have been ported, linked, amalgamated or dissolved;
- (g) the names of congregations which have been visited during the year;
- (h) the names of congregations which have given no replies, or replies which were defective, to the annual Statistical Sheet; and the names of congregations which have not sent to the Church’s Financial Secretary the amounts in full of each Assembly assessment or which have not contributed either to the Assembly’s United Appeal or to each mission or committee listed therein;
- (i) that the financial reports of the congregations have been, or are being, printed in pamphlet form;
- (j) the numbers voting for and against any overture sent down by the Assembly for its judgment; and

- (k) any other matter upon which the General Assembly directs it to report.

No other matter than those above specified shall be dealt with in the Presbytery's annual report, which shall be sent to the Clerk of Assembly immediately after its adoption by Presbytery."

That there is no provision in Par 260 of The Code for the reporting annually to the General Assembly of the commissioning and appointing of deaconesses, senior lecturers, auxiliary ministers, lay agents and missionaries who have been called by an authorised body in the Church.

Memorialists, therefore, pray your Venerable Assembly to direct that the names of deaconesses, senior lecturers, auxiliary ministers, lay agents and missionaries under its care who, since its last report, have died, retired, resigned, or have been commissioned and/or appointed by Presbytery, with respective dates, be included, henceforth, in the annual report of Presbytery; and that the Clerk of the Assembly present overtures to the 2019 General Assembly to amend Par 260 of The Code, accordingly and to mirror additionally the requirements of Par 260(d).

And Memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Adopted by the Presbytery of Templepatrick at its meeting on the 6th day of February 2018.

Rev COLIN McDOWELL, Moderator

Rev DESI PAUL, Clerk

REPORTS OF PRESBYTERIES

The ARDS PRESBYTERY report that the Rev JM Wade is their Moderator; that the Rev HS Boyd, Minister Emerita of Millisle and Ballycopeland, died on 11th April 2017; that the Rev JKF Watson, Minister Emeritus (Released) of Ballygrainey, died on 9th June 2017; that the Rev Professor SN Williams, Theological Professor, UTC, retired on 31st August 2017; that the Rev PT Dalzell presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was installed to the Charge of Groomsport on 3rd March 2017, that the Rev Dr SI Dennis, Minister without Charge under the care of Presbytery, was installed to the Charge of Portaferry on 15th September 2017, that the Rev CWA Jones, presented credentials from the Presbytery of Omagh and was installed to the Charge of Regent Street, Newtownards on 26th January 2018; that Mr RS Hamilton, presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Movilla on 19th May 2017; that Mr SW Orr presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ballymena and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Trinity, Bangor on 31st August 2017; that Mr RR Tregaskis was licensed on 25th June 2017; that Dr SA Wright presented credentials from the Presbytery of South Belfast and was received as a Licentiate; that Mr DJ Gray, Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of South Belfast; that Dr GW Clinton, Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Monaghan; that Mr CN Lynn, Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge the Revs David McKee (retired), CD Mawhinney, Simon Henning; as a Licentiate Mr KJ Ward; as a Student Mr David Morrison; that Mr Edward Kirwan, Licentiate, ceased to have that status on 7th March 2017; that they held Consultations at Conlig, Millisle and Ballycopeland, Carrowdore and Ballyfrenis and Kilcooley; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The ARMAGH PRESBYTERY report that the Rev Professor Michael McClenahan is their Moderator; that the Rev FAC Wilson, Minister Emeritus, became Minister Emeritus (Released) on 5th December 2017; that the Rev PD Thompson, Minister of Waringstown, resigned his Charge on 27th June 2017 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that the Rev Barry Reid, Minister of Caledon and Minterburn, resigned his Charge on 6th July 2017; that the Rev RL Brown presented credentials from the Presbytery of Templepatrick and was installed to the Charge of First Portadown on 28th April 2017; that the Rev Dr Michael McClenahan, a Minister without Charge under the care of Presbytery, was installed as Professor of Systematic Theology in Union Theological College on 13th September 2017; that Mr PWA McClelland presented credentials from the Presbytery of Templepatrick

and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Ahorey and Clare on 8th September 2017; that Mr GR Mullan presented credentials from the Presbytery of Tyrone and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Moy and Benburb on 5th January 2018; that Mr SD Kennedy, Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that Mr JU Torrens presented credentials from the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady and was received as a Licentiate; that under their care are – as a Minister without Charge the Rev Dr JWP McConnell; as Licentiates Mr CW Jackson and Mr JU Torrens; as Students Mr JT Graham and Mr R Hill; that the Rev Barry Reid, Minister without Charge, ceased to have that status on 5th December 2017; that no consultations were held during the year; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The BALLYMENA PRESBYTERY report that the Rev Dr MD McNeely is their Moderator; that the Rev EEH Porter, Minister Emeritus (Released) of First Broughshane, died on 26th January 2018; that the Rev Brian McManus retired from the duties of the active ministry in Cloughwater on 8th July 2017; that the Rev RS Agnew presented credentials from the Presbytery of Monaghan and was installed to the Charge of First Broughshane on 28th April 2017; that the Rev PD Thompson presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh and was installed to the Charge of Connor on 28th June 2017; that Mr SD Kennedy presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Buckna on 2nd February 2018; that Mr SW Orr, Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that under their care are: as Licentiates Mr M Boyd, Mr JJ Boyd and Mr MS Rutledge; as Students for the Ministry Mr JA Porter, Mr C Wilson and Mr MRT Rodgers; that no Consultations were held during the year; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

The NORTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY report that the Rev David Clawson is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr SE Hughes, Minister of Whitehouse, retired on 31st December 2017; that the Rev DF Leal Zamora, Minister of the Living Room Belfast, resigned his Charge on 11th January 2018 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Down; that the Rev Dr WJM Parker presented credentials from the Presbytery of Templepatrick and was installed to the Charge of Sinclair Seamen's on 1st September 2017; that Mr Ian Cahoon presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Alexandra on 30th November 2017; that Mr CN Lynn presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Rathcoole on 9th December 2017; that the Rev Dr LH Eagleson, Minister without Charge under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of South Belfast; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge the Revs

Dr LE Carroll, JSB Drennan (retired) and FW Vincent; as Licentiates Mr AJ Downey, Mr SN Hawthorne, Mr JA Martin, Mr David McCarthy, Mr RA Orr and Mr JTH Porter; as Students Mr Philip Houston, Mr Gareth Keaveny and Mr John McCracken; that no Consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed and will be supplied separately.

The SOUTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY report that the Rev Ivan Steen is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr DW Lapsley, Minister Emeritus of Fisherwick, died on 14th May 2017; that the Rev Dr WI Hull, Minister Emeritus, became a Minister Emeritus (Released) on 6th February 2018; that the Rev GJ Jordan, Minister of Kinghan Church, resigned his Charge on 3rd March 2017 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that the Rev KM Mbayo, QUB Chaplain and Dean of Residence, Derryvolgie, resigned her Charge on 19th August 2017 and became a Minister without Charge; that the Rev Dr RM Crooks, Minister of Belvoir, resigned his Charge on 3rd October 2017 to take up a ministry position outside of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland; that the Rev PG McDowell, Mission Support Officer (Partnerships) within the Mission Department of PCI, resigned his post on 31st December 2017 and became a Minister without Charge; that the Rev Graeme Fowles presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was installed to the Charge of Kilmakee on 4th June 2017; that the Rev William Harkness presented credentials from the Presbytery of Route and was installed in the Home Mission and inducted to the Charge of Great Victoria Street with additional Missional Work on 1st December 2017; that Mrs CE Heron, Licentiate under the care of Presbytery was ordained and installed to the Charge of Dunmurry on 3rd May 2017; that Mr DJ Gray presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was ordained and installed to the work of Chaplain in Queen's University, Stranmillis University College and Union Theological College on 26th November 2017; that the Rev Dr LH Eagleson presented credentials from the Presbytery of North Belfast and was received as a Minister without Charge under the care of Presbytery; that Dr Andre Alves-Areias was licensed on 4th June 2017 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; that Dr SA Wright was licensed on 11th June 2017 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that Mr DP Curran presented credentials from Dublin and Munster and was received as a Licentiate; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge Revs CH Deering, Dr LH Eagleson, KM Mbayo, JD Maxwell, PG McDowell and JA Peacock; as Licentiates Mr JC Newell, Mr JJ O'Donnell and Mr DP Curran; that no Consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The EAST BELFAST PRESBYTERY report that the Rev Daniel Rankin is their Moderator; that the Rev KA McBride, Minister of Orangefield, retired on 30th June 2017; that the Rev ME Taylor, Chaplain to Marie Curie, retired on 30th June 2017; that the Rev JM Maddock, Minister Emeritus, became a Minister Emeritus (Released) on 5th December 2017; that the Rev Dr David Murphy, Minister Emeritus, became a Minister Emeritus (Released) on 5th December 2017; that the Rev WH Peden, Minister Emeritus, became a Minister Emeritus (Released) on 5th December 2017; that the Rev Dr VH Ryan, Minister Emeritus, became a Minister Emeritus (Released) on 5th December 2017; that the Rev ED Smyth, Minister Emeritus, became a Minister Emeritus (Released) on 5th December 2017; that the Rev PT Dalzell, Minister of Cregagh, resigned his Charge on 2nd March 2017 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that the Rev Graeme Fowles, Minister of Ravenhill, resigned his Charge on 3rd June 2017 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of South Belfast; that the Rev DP Burke, Moderator's Assistant in Bloomfield, resigned his Charge on 31st August 2017 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster; that the Rev Dr MJ Welsh, Mission Development Officer within the Congregational Life and Witness Department of PCI, resigned his post on 5th September 2017 and was received as a Minister without Charge; that Mr SJ Lowry, Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was ordained and inducted as Assistant to the Moderator in First Holywood on 30th April 2017; that Mr BN van der Linde, Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was ordained and installed as Chaplain to Her Majesty's Forces, Royal Navy on 28th January 2018; that Mr SP Kennedy was licensed on 28th May 2017 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that Mr AJ Downey was licensed on 4th June 2017 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that the Rev PP Campbell, Minister without Charge under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster; that Mr WA Dickey, Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that the Rev JM Casement presented credentials from the Presbytery of Down and was received as a Minister without Charge under the care of Presbytery; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge Revs JM Casement, WJ Harshaw, Dr DJ Montgomery, BJ Walker, Dr MJ Welsh; as Licentiates Mr Richard Cronin and Mr Alan Marsh; as Students Mr S Bostock, Mr P Boyd and Mr B Johnston; that they held no Consultations; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The CARRICKFERGUS PRESBYTERY report that the Rev FMA Forbes is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr David Chapman, Minister of Second Islandmagee, retired on 31st March 2017; that the Rev JH Robinson, Minister of Downshire, retired on 25th June 2017; that the Revs JH Robinson and RWC Clements, Ministers Emeriti, became Ministers Emeriti (Released) on 3rd October 2017; that the Revs SS McFarland and NM Williamson, Ministers Emeriti, became Ministers Emeriti (Released) on 6th February 2018; that the Rev RJ McCullough, Minister of Woodburn and Loughmorne, resigned his Charge on 30th April 2017 and became a Minister without Charge under the care of Presbytery; that following the linkage of the Congregations of First Islandmagee and Second Islandmagee, the Rev PA Bovill, was installed to the Congregation of Second Islandmagee on 8th September 2017; that Mr RS Hamilton, Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that Mr Ian Cahoon, Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that Mr AD Burke, Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge the Revs RJ Gilkinson and RJ McCullough; as Licentiates Mr CMS Barron, Mr Andrew Gill, Mr DJ Kelly and Mrs Joanne Smith; that no Consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The COLERAINE AND LIMAVADY PRESBYTERY report that the Rev TAS Graham is their Moderator; that the Rev EM Borland, Minister Emeritus of Burnside, died on 19th August 2017; that the Rev Victor Whyte, Minister Emeritus of Macosquin, died on 29th November 2017; that the Rev JA Noble, Minister of Balteagh and Bovevagh, retired on 30th November 2017; that the Rev GA McCracken, Associate Minister of Ballywillan, resigned his Charge on 7th September 2017 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal; that the Rev Dr TP Fleming, Minister of First Coleraine, resigned his Charge on 1st October 2017; that the Rev Dr TP Fleming was inducted for Global Mission Service on 21st January 2018; that the Rev Stanley Stewart presented credentials from the Presbytery of Monaghan and was installed to the Charge of Castlerock on 3rd February 2018; that Mr JU Torrens was licensed on 28th May 2017 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Armagh; that Mr JD McKane presented credentials from the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal and was received as a Licentiate; that under their care are: as Licentiates Mr RJ McClure and Mr JD McKane; as a Student Mr James O'Neill; that the Rev CJ Aitcheson, Minister without Charge, ceased to have that status on 6th February 2018; that they held no Consultations; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately.

The DERRY AND DONEGAL PRESBYTERY report that the Rev MF Russell is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr IJ Wilson, MBE, Minister Emeritus of Cumber and Upper Cumber, died on 3rd October 2017; that the Rev SJ Hanna, Minister of Glendermott, retired on 31st May 2017; that the Rev DA Edgar, Minister without Charge, retired on 2nd May 2017; that following the linkage of the Congregations of Donagheady and Leckpatrick, the Rev MF Russell was installed to the Congregation of Donagheady on 14th May 2017; that following the linkage of the Congregations of Sion Mills and Strabane, the Rev DM Shaw was installed to the Congregation of Sion Mills on 11th June 2017; that the Rev GA McCracken presented credentials from the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady and was installed to the charge of Ray and Newtowncunningham on 8th September 2017; that Miss SJ Moore presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dromore and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Rathmullan, Milford and Fannet on 20th January 2018; that Mr JD McKane was licensed on 21st May 2017 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady; that Mr DJ Clarke, Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Monaghan; that Mr MTW McMaw, Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Iveagh; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge the Revs KG Patterson and JC Tenney; as a Student Mr RW McFaul; that the Rev RA Mulholland, Minister without Charge, ceased to have that status from 9th June 2017; that they held Consultations at Carrigart, Dunfanaghy, First Derry and Monreagh; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The DOWN PRESBYTERY report that the Rev Owen Patterson is their Moderator; that the Rev Samuel Armstrong, Minister without Charge (retired), died on 8th February 2018; that the Rev Dr BCG Black, Minister of Ballygowan, was released from his Charge on grounds of Medical Incapacity on 31st October 2017 and was received as a Minister without Charge; that the Rev DF Leal Zamora presented credentials from the Presbytery of North Belfast and was installed to the Charge of First Ballynahinch on 12th January 2018; that Mr MA McCormick was licensed on 4th June 2017 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; that Mr WJC Brogan presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster and was received as a Licentiate; that Rev JM Casement was given credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that the Rev CG Anderson was given credentials to the Presbytery of Monaghan; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge the Revs Dr BCG Black and GR Stockdale; as Licentiates Mr WJC Brogan, Mr BA Kee and Mr AS McQuade; as a Student Mr P Burke; that they held no Consultations; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The DROMORE PRESBYTERY report that the Rev Gareth McFadden is their Moderator; that the Rev Kenneth Smyth Minister Emeritus (Released) of Drumbo, died on 18th July 2017; that the Very Rev Dr Howard Cromie, Minister Emeritus (Released) of Railway Street Lisburn, died on 6th October 2017; that the Rev DB Knox, Minister of Harmony Hill, retired on 30th April 2017; that the Rev AS Thompson, Minister of First Dromara was released from his Charge on grounds of Medical Incapacity on 30th September 2017 and was received as a Minister without Charge; that the Rev RD Cameron resigned his Charge as Prison Chaplain HMP Maghaberry on 18th January 2018 and was installed in the Home Mission and inducted to the Charge of St Columba's on 19th January 2018; that Mr JS Maguire was licensed on 11th June 2017; that Mr PL Poots was licensed on 16th June 2017 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Iveagh; that Mr RS Aicken was licensed on 18th June 2017; that Dr Andre Alves-Areias presented credentials from the Presbytery of South Belfast and was received as a Licentiate; that Mr MA McCormick presented credentials from the Presbytery of Down and was received as a Licentiate; that Miss SJ Moore, Licentiate without Charge under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge the Revs WJ Todd and AS Thompson; as Licentiates Mr ET Frazer, Dr Andre Alves-Areias, Mr JS Maguire, Mr RS Aicken and Mr MA McCormick; that they held Consultations at Elmwood and Magheragall; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The DUBLIN AND MUNSTER PRESBYTERY report that the Rev AJ Dunlop is their Moderator; that the Rev JG Faris, Minister of Trinity Cork and Aghada, retired on 31st March 2017; that the Rev SJ Lockington, Minister of Corboy and Mullingar, resigned his Charge on 1st September 2017 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that Rev PP Campbell presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was installed to the Charge of Christ Church Rathgar on 16th June 2017; that the Rev DP Burke presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was installed in the Home Mission and inducted to the Charge of Drogheda on 1st September 2017; that Mr WJC Brogan was licensed on 28th May 2017 and given credentials to Presbytery of Down; that Mr DP Curran was licensed on 16th June 2017 and given credentials to the Presbytery of South Belfast; that no Consultations were held during the year; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The IVEAGH PRESBYTERY report that the Rev JL Rutherford is their Moderator; that the Rev EG McAuley, Minister without Charge (retired), died on 21st April 2017; that the Rev DS Mackay, Minister Emeritus, became Minister Emeritus (Released) on 6th October 2016; that Mr MTW McMaw presented credentials from the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Tandragee on 24th March 2017; that Mr PL Poots presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dromore and was received as Licentiate; that they have under their care as a Licentiate Mr PL Poots; that they held Consultations at Hilltown, Clonduff and First Rathfriland; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The MONAGHAN PRESBYTERY report that the Rev Dr GW Clinton is their Moderator; that the Rev RS Agnew, Minister of First Monaghan and Smithborough, resigned his Charge on 27th April 2017 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that the Rev Stanley Stewart, Minister of Ballyhobridge, Clones, Newbliss and Stonebridge resigned his Charge on 2nd February 2018 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady; that the Rev CG Anderson presented credentials from the Presbytery of Down and was installed to the Charge of First Castleblayney, Frankford and Corvally on 1st December 2017; that Dr GW Clinton presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was ordained and installed to the Charge of First Ballybay, Second Ballybay, Rockcorry and Drumkeen on 3rd June 2017; that Mr DJ Clarke presented credentials from the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal and was ordained and installed to the Home Mission and inducted to the Charge of Sligo with Boyle on 13th January 2018; that they have under their care as a Minister without Charge the Rev DJM Boyle; that they held Consultations at Ballina, Killala and Ballymote; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately.

The NEWRY PRESBYTERY report that the Rev BD Colvin is their Moderator; that the Rev SA Finlay, Minister of Annalong, retired on 30th June 2017; that the Rev FJ Gibson, Minister of First Drumbanagher and Jerrettspass and Kingsmill, retired on 6th August 2017; that under their care are: as a Minister without Charge Rev BAH Wilson; as Students Mr CB Mulvenny and Mr DS Bingham; that they held a Consultation at Cremore; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

The OMAGH PRESBYTERY report that the Rev NRA Cooper is their Moderator; that the Rev RA Campbell, Minister of Clogher and Glenhoy, died on 5th June 2017; that the Rev CWA Jones, Chaplain to the Forces, resigned his Charge on 25th January 2018 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that they have under their care as a Minister without Charge the Rev JA Gordon; that they held no Consultations; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately.

The ROUTE PRESBYTERY report that the Rev JP Stanbridge is their Moderator; that the Rev William Harkness, Minister of Mosside and Toberdoney, resigned his Charge on 30th November 2017 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of South Belfast; that under their care are: as a Minister without Charge the Rev Dr Victor Dobbin CB (retired); as a Student Mr Richard Morrison; that they held no Consultations throughout the year; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately.

The TEMPLEPATRICK PRESBYTERY report that the Rev Jonathan Boyd is their Moderator; that the Rev RA Boyd, Minister Emeritus (Released), of Second Ballyeaston, died on 7th February 2018; that the Rev RL Brown, Minister of Second Randalstown, resigned his Charge on 27th April 2017 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Armagh; that Mr Ross Kernohan, a Licentiate, resigned on 1st September 2017 to take up a ministry position outside of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland; that the Rev SJ Lockington, presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster and was installed to the Charge of First Antrim on 2nd September 2017; that Mr AD Burke presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and was received as a Licentiate; that Mr SP Kennedy presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was received as a Licentiate; that the Rev Dr WJM Parker, Minister without Charge under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that Mr PWA McClelland, Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Armagh; that under their care are: as a Minister without Charge the Rev JL Tosh; as Licentiates Mr AD Burke, Mr SP Kennedy and Mr AJ McCracken; that Mr MPR Fryer, Licentiate, had his licence withdrawn on 11th February 2018; that they held no Consultations; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The TYRONE PRESBYTERY report that the Rev JB Mullan is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr JI Thompson, Minister of First Cookstown, retired on 16th July 2017; that the Rev GJ Jordan presented credentials from the Presbytery of South Belfast and was installed to the Charge of Bellaghy and Knockloughrim on 4th March 2017; that Mr WA Dickey presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was ordained and installed to the Charge of First Stewartstown, Brigh and Albany on 4th January 2018; that Mr GR Mullan, Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Armagh; that they have under their care as a Minister without Charge the Rev WI Ferris; that they held no Consultations during the year; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report of the Presbyteries be received.

TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

Chairman: Rev WILFRED ORR

Secretary: Mr CLIVE KNOX

1. The following is an extract from the minutes of the proceedings of the Trustees at their Annual General Meeting held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, on 20th March 2018.
2. There were no Trustees whose term of office was due to expire and who were eligible for re-election.
3. Moved by Very Rev Dr D Clarke, seconded by Mr L Cubitt, and agreed that Rev W Orr, OBE, be appointed Chairman until the 2019 General Assembly.
4. The Statements of audited Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2017 of the following were laid before the Trustees:
 - (a) The General Investment Fund
 - (b) The Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
(Incorporating The Commutation Fund, The Non-Participating Trusts Fund, The Magee Fund, The Tops Wilson Trust Fund, The Fire Insurance Trust Fund, The Fortune Mission Bequest, The Lindsay Memorial Fund, The McClure Trust Fund, The Local Bible Fund and various other Trust Funds).
5. Moved by Mrs M Guiler, seconded by Mr N Bennett and unanimously agreed that the Report and the Statements of Account be adopted, and lodged with the Clerk of Assembly to be laid before the Assembly in June. The Report and the Statements of Account were signed and lodged in accordance with the foregoing resolution.
6. The Trustees also received and examined the Accounts for 2017 of the John Getty Trust and accepted these for inclusion in the volume of Accounts to be submitted to the General Assembly.
7. The Trustees nominated Mr D Crowe and Mrs M Guiler as members to attend the General Assembly according to the provision of the Code Par 97(h)(iii).

Trust Funds

8. A summary Account of the various Trust Funds is included in the Book of Accounts 2017. The following Trust Funds are distributed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Trustees.
As in 2017, the Trustees have agreed to recommend to the General Assembly that, where the terms of Trust permit, these should be

distributed via the United Appeal rather than directly to various agencies.

Mrs A M Davidson Trust: The total income for 2017 available for distribution is £6,882.30. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	£6,882.30
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Sir Wm V McCleery Estate: The total income for 2017 available for distribution is £35,932.68. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Central Ministry Fund	80%
Retired Ministers' Fund	10%
Widows of Ministers' Fund	10%

Estate of Miss Irene Scott: The total income for 2017 available for distribution is £7,444.98. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	£7,444.98
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Estate of Miss Ida Mary McGeown: The total income for 2017 available for distribution is £4,777.92. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	£4,777.92
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Estate of Mr Victor Morrow: The total income for 2017 available for distribution is £1,557.36. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	£1,557.36
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THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH INVESTMENT FUND (commonly known as **The General Investment Fund**)

9. The General Investment Fund was originally established under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 1964. It is a Common Investment Fund in which any charity connected with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland can invest.
10. Investments in the Fund or shareholdings tend to arise from trust funds, bequests or donations which often have particular terms or restrictions attached regarding the application of the capital and income.
11. Further details about the General Investment Fund, the investment performance and investment holdings, is available in a booklet available from the Financial Secretary's Department.

12. The Trustees have prepared the accounts of the General Investment Fund for the year ended 31 December 2017 in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Financial Statement of Authorised Funds (May 2014). These are included in the Book of Accounts presented to the General Assembly. These accounts provide detailed information regarding the Fund and in particular its performance, investment allocation, level of income and distributions during the year.

13. Declaration of Dividend	15.4.17	30.09.17
Number of shares qualifying	5,428,615	5,482,218
Income from investment for distribution and Tax recoverable less Administrative Charge and Investment Advisers' Fees	£663,562	£849,777
Dividend per share	12.00p	15.00p

14. During 2017, £27,444 was transferred to the Dividend Equalisation Reserve, in accordance with the Scheme Rules, and the balance on the Reserve at 31 December, 2017 is £591,928.

15. The combined annual Dividend of 27.00p per share for 2017 is to be compared with 26.00p for 2016, 26.00p for 2015, 26.00p for 2014, 26.00p for 2013, 26.00p for 2012, 25.00p for 2011, 26.00p for 2010; 28.00p for 2009; 33.00p for 2008; 31.00p for 2007.

Valuation	31.03.17	31.03.18
	£	£
Valuation of Investments	55,539,555	62,839,392
Cash on Deposit	484,946	161,499
Dividend Equalisation Reserve	564,484	550,127
	<u>£56,588,985</u>	<u>£63,551,018</u>

No of Shares Issued	5,491,773	6,195,804
Share Value	£10.3043	£10.2571

The shares in the Fund have from 28th February 2017 been valued on a monthly basis. Previously they were valued on two occasions during the year being 15th April and 15th October. The monthly share prices are included in the audited accounts. The share value at the end of the last financial year, 31st December 2017 was £10.7557 per share (2016, £9.9851 (notional)).

16. The Trustees meet with Investment Managers, Newton Investment Management Limited, three times a year to review investment performance. During 2017, there was a return of 11.37% compared to a benchmark return of 10.25%. Newton Investment Management Limited was appointed Investment Adviser to the Trustees Funds in June 2006 and from then to 31st December 2017, the General Investment Fund returned 7.51% per annum compared to the benchmark of 7.15%.

Commutation Fund and Magee Funds

17. As well as overseeing the General Investment Fund's portfolio of investments, the Trustees have a similar role in relation to the Commutation and Magee Funds' investments. There have been held in separate portfolios of investments also managed by Newton Investment Management Limited. The investment strategy and underlying investments in these Funds was very similar to those in the General Investment Fund although the Funds were considerably smaller in terms of value. The investments of these Funds had been held in separate investment portfolios as the Rules of the General Investment Fund restricted these Funds from investing in the General Investment Fund. Following the permission of the General Assembly in 2017 to amend the rules of the General Investment Fund to remove this restriction, the Trustees sought and obtained the permission of the Department for Communities to amend the Rules of the Fund. On 1st January 2018 the investments in the Commutation Fund, valued at £6,039,839, and Magee Fund, valued at £1,350,296 were transferred into the General Investment and shares in the General Investment Fund of 561,548 and 125,542 allocated to the two Funds respectively.

Trustees Discretionary Fund

18. On occasions the Trustees are notified of bequests where the terms may state they are for the "benefit of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland" or the "Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland". The present policy is to allocate these to the Trustees Discretionary Fund which is invested in the General Investment Fund unless an immediate use is identified. The Trustees will consider requests for financial support through the use of the Fund's annual income or capital and in doing so will have regard to any expressions of wish or known interests of the donor. No amounts were distributed by the Fund during 2017. At 31st December 2017 the Fund held 57,866 shares in the General Investment Fund which valued the holding at £622,389.

Crescent Church Loan Fund

19. The Crescent Loan Fund was established following the sale of the Crescent Church premises in 1975 and provides low interest loans to congregations having short term financial problems.

- (a) During 2017 interest was charged on loans at half the total of bank base rate plus 2% (i.e.1.25%) on the average balance outstanding over the term of the loan.
- (b) The maximum loan normally provided by the Fund is £50,000 and this has to be repaid normally within 3 years, although loans over 5 years can be provided in certain circumstances. Further information about loans from the Fund is available from the Financial Secretary's Department.

- (c) During 2017 the Trustees provided loans of £55,000 and the loans outstanding at 31st December 2017 were £90,917 and at that time, the fund had £280,597 available to meet loan requests.

Getty Bequest

20. The allocation of grants out of the income of the Trust Estate of John Getty for the year ending 31st December, 2017 was as follows:

Overseas – Foreign	£2,330
Overseas – Jewish	£1,270
Home Mission	£3,070
Belfast City Mission	£2,330
TOTAL	£9,000

Bequests

21. The Trustees received a report of all bequests notified to the Church during 2017 and wish to record their deep gratitude for those who have decided to support the Church in this way.

Local Bible Fund

22. As reported in 2017 The Trustees agreed to take on responsibility for the management of the Local Bible Fund from the Local Bible Fund Committee. The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland granted approval to the transfer on 17th January 2017. The value of the Fund transferred to the Trustees was £83,816.

The Sir Thomas McClure Bequest

23. As reported in 2017 The Trustees agreed to take on responsibility for the management of the Sir Thomas McClure from the former Trustees. The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland granted approval to the transfer on 9th May 2017. The value of the fund transferred to the Trustees was £85,489.

The Council for Social Witness and Peacehaven Limited

24. The Trustees received a request from the Council for Social Witness for the Trustees to act as the sole member with regard to the possible transfer of Peacehaven Trust Company to the Church. The company provides residential care services for adults with a range of disabilities in Greystones, Co Wicklow. The Trustees agree to act in this capacity providing the Council obtained all other necessary approvals.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That in accordance with the Will of the late John Getty the following be constituted as the Committee for the “direction and management of the application” of the income from the Getty Bequest: Very Revs Dr David Clarke, Dr Samuel Hutchinson; Revs Dr DJ Watts, TD Gribben; Sir Bruce Robinson, Messrs Norman Bennett, Douglas Crowe, Mrs M Guiler
2.
 - (a) That the recommendation regarding the Mrs AM Davidson Trust be adopted.
 - (b) That the recommendation regarding the Sir Wm V McCleery Trust be adopted.
 - (c) That the recommendation regarding the Miss Irene Scott Trust be adopted.
 - (d) That the recommendation regarding the Miss Ida Mary McGeown Trust be adopted.
 - (e) That the recommendation regarding the Victor Morrow Trust be adopted.
3. That the Report of the Trustees be received.

COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Convener: Very Rev Dr TN HAMILTON, OBE

Secretary: THE CLERK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Council for Public Affairs met on three occasions since the 2017 General Assembly to receive reports from its Committee, Panels and Task Groups; consider responses to public consultations; and discuss its wider strategy of engagement on issues of public significance.
2. The **State Education Committee** (paragraphs 14-20) oversees matters of state education in Northern Ireland. The Committee's main work is to consider educational developments and transmit thinking to the Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC), through which the Presbyterian Church in Ireland works with the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland on matters of education policy in Northern Ireland.
3. The **Peace and Reconciliation Panel** (paragraphs 21-23) handles matters of public policy that are relevant to peacebuilding and reconciliation.
4. The **Republic of Ireland Panel** (paragraphs 24-28) is responsible for overseeing matters of public policy in the Republic of Ireland.
5. The **Dealing with the Past Project Task Group** (paragraphs 29-33) is responsible for taking forward the project agreed by the 2016 General Assembly to record and examine Presbyterian responses to the Troubles.
6. The **Eighth Amendment Task Group** (paragraphs 34-42) was established by the 2017 General Assembly to report and make recommendations to the Council for Public Affairs and the General Council concerning the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution of Ireland.
7. A substantial paper on euthanasia is attached for consideration by the Assembly as an appendix to this report.

Introduction

8. This has been a very troubling year for the work of the Council for Public Affairs. The lack of an Executive in Stormont, and the increasingly fractious relationships between Dublin and London over the border implications of Brexit, continue to increase the sense of disillusionment and disengagement with politics and politicians. The quality of public comment and debate is at times atrocious, with social media becoming at times very aggressive towards views that are not seen as politically correct.

9. This context, where the development of public policy is at a standstill in many areas, continues to make it quite difficult for our Church to be heard in the public square, especially on issues such as poverty and welfare reform, education, legacy matters and issues of public morality where we believe we have some expertise and experience on which to draw.
10. Nonetheless, we have been steadily working away on a range of topics to provide the basis for a coherent input to public policy as and when they come back to the centre of public attention. These include issues such as the family, forgiveness in the context of reconciliation, and an amnesty in the event of a statute of limitations being proposed by the Westminster Government.
11. Since the 2017 General Assembly the Council has responded to the following public consultations:
 - Continuing Healthcare (Department of Health NI);
 - NI Health and Social Care Trusts' Savings Plans;
 - Minibus Driving Licence Requirements (Department for Infrastructure NI).
12. Exceptionally valuable work has been done in relation to the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution of Ireland and on education matters by the Republic of Ireland Panel. In addition there is crucially important ongoing work on education in Northern Ireland, peace-making, and dealing with the past, all of which are covered in the body of this report.
13. In this troubling environment, it is of great importance that, as Christian people, we do not join in the collective hand-wringing so apparent in wider society. We are people who have firm confidence in the sovereignty of the God of the nations and in the power of the truth to set people genuinely free. In presenting this report at Assembly, the Convener will also take the opportunity to express deep appreciation to so many people who continue to serve all our people the length and breadth of Ireland with such diligence and commitment in spite of the enormous difficulties they face on a daily basis. We remain a people who are much blessed in a land that is also greatly privileged – especially as we see the horrors that so many millions are facing day and daily in so many parts of God's world.

STATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

14. Education continues to be of central importance to PCI, with much work going on through the State Education Committee (SEC), Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC), Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC), Education Authority (EA) and various representative, advocacy and lobbying work by the Public Affairs Officer, SEC Convener and

other key PCI members. In acknowledgement of the denomination's interest in this area, the Chief Executive of the EA was recently invited to address the Council for Public Affairs (CPA) on the current state of education in Northern Ireland.

15. At the outset of this report, the SEC wishes to recognise and thank the Public Affairs Officer, Gavin Norris, for all that he has done throughout the year. In addition to his wide-ranging portfolio and workload, Gavin has assumed the de facto role of PCI Education Secretary and has served the denomination with diligence, determination and confidence, ensuring that the voice of the PCI is strong within the world of education.

Committee Business

16. The SEC has met twice since the last General Assembly. At its November meeting members were addressed by the Executive Director of the Goliath Trust, who apprised the Committee of the work being done to tackle educational underachievement in areas of social disadvantage. Members were also updated on a new OCN RE qualification, issues from the TRC and the emerging relationship with the CSSC. At its February meeting, members were updated on the education input into the PCI Human Identity Task Group, a revised TRC Memorandum of Understanding, the EA presentation to the CPA and issues from CSSC.
17. Discussions have continued to take place at the meetings around governance, teacher workload, the delivery of and support for the teaching of RE, educational underachievement and support for schools in issues relating to human identity. The members also confirmed the nomination of John Wilkinson OBE to fill the vacancy following the retirement of Uel McCrea OBE from the TRC. The committee wishes to note its gratitude for the work done by Uel over many years, not least in how instrumental he was in the creation of the CSSC and his tenure as the Interim Chair of the organisation during its initial setting up.

Controlled Schools' Support Council

18. The relationship between CSSC and the denomination continues to develop. The SEC Convener is the Vice-Chair of the CSSC and sits on its Education and Research Committee, and the Public Affairs Officer sits on the Ethos Working Group. In March the organisation hosted a conference on 'Exploring Ethos' which was addressed and chaired by the SEC Convener. The relationship is one which is highly valued and the SEC commends the excellent work done by the organisation in its first full year.

Transferor Representatives' Council

19. Much of the day-to-day work in education continues to be progressed through the TRC, as the collective policy-making organisation for the education bodies of PCI, the Church of Ireland and the Methodist

Church in Ireland. Since the last General Assembly work has been progressed in the following areas:

- (a) RE and Collective Worship: The TRC has set up a Working Group involving RE practitioners to address some outstanding issues, including the low frequency of RE lessons and collective worship in schools and the lack of support provided to RE teachers. One of its first orders of business was to consider the CCEA RE Advisory Group and it recommended that TRC representatives argue for the retention of the RE Advisory Group and that it focus on (a) facilitating a forum for productive networking within the profession and (b) establishing stronger educational and professional credentials for RE. These suggestions were accepted by CCEA. The Working Group will focus initially on drawing together existing RE resources, updating these where necessary, and making them available to RE teachers. The Group is working on a proposal to bring an intern on board for one year and this will be discussed again at the next meeting of the TRC.
- (b) In addition a working group of the four main Churches, chaired by the Rev Dr Colin McClure, are reviewing the RE Core Syllabus. It is currently gathering materials from other jurisdictions for examples of good practice.
- (c) Area Planning: In previous years the TRC had been involved in area planning groups coordinated by statutory agencies. With the establishment of the Education Authority, a new Steering Group has been formed with senior representatives from stakeholder groups, including EA, the CSSC, CCMS and the new Catholic Schools' Trustee Service. The TRC is in negotiations with the Department of Education to ensure its place on this important body.
- (d) Ethos in Controlled Schools: The TRC is working with the CSSC on the part of its remit to develop and maintain the collective ethos of the Controlled Sector. A Working Group consisting of CSSC and TRC representatives has been established and has met twice. The TRC shared the 'Moving Forward Together' document produced by the TRC in 2007, which offers a transferor's contribution on ethos and core values in controlled schools.
- (e) Transferor Governors: The EA hopes to have reconstituted Boards of Governors in place by October-December 2018. The TRC met with EA officials and strongly emphasised the need for the TRC to be furnished with a complete list of nominating authorities, so that the Churches can update contact information before letters are sent out by EA. The TRC used the opportunity to promote the Churches' role in education and the important role that Transferor Governors can play. It therefore undertook to update and refresh the Governors' Handbook that was issued by the TRC in the mid-1990s. It also commissioned a promotional video for use in congregations.

20. The world of education is one in which the churches have traditionally held a key role and it is vital that this continues to be the case. In a world in which our values and opinions are increasingly being questioned, it is incumbent upon us to ensure that we can articulate clearly our place in the life of educational policy and the day-to-day workings of schools. As we pray for our pupils, teachers and principals in this time of political, economic and societal uncertainty, let us pray too that the cornerstone values of our faith continue to be upheld within schooling and that Christians who have responsibility for guiding policy, leading schools and teaching children do so with confidence, grace and wisdom.

ANDREW BROWN, Convener

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION PANEL

21. At the time of writing, it is highly likely that the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement will pass without resolution of the political impasse which has prevented the formation of a functioning Executive and Assembly in Northern Ireland since January 2017. This has resulted in budgetary uncertainties and a lack of political direction which has adversely affected the delivery of public services, including those provided through the voluntary and community services. In parallel, the Brexit debate continues to dominate political discourse with sharply divided views on the likely implications for the UK and for Ireland, North and South.
22. It has therefore been a challenging environment in which to promote the Church's role in peace and reconciliation as developments in respect of legacy and victims arising from the Stormont House Agreement remain stalled. However, it remains incumbent on the Church to be an agent of reconciliation and healing and the Panel will continue to seek opportunities to bring a distinctly Christian perspective to the issues which contribute to division in our community.
23. The Panel is conscious of many within our denomination who, unseen and unsung, seek to promote reconciliation within local communities and encourage congregations to consider how they might use the Vision for Society adopted by the General Assembly in 2016 to further this ministry.

EDGAR JARDINE, Convener

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND PANEL

The Republic of Ireland Panel met twice since the last General Assembly.

24. Presbyterians continue to be honoured with a distinctive influence and presence in the Republic of Ireland, despite being a small minority. One of the key aims of the Panel is to continue to develop relationships

with TDs and Senators. The Convener was therefore pleased to be able to join the Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly, and members of the Church of Ireland and Methodist Church in Ireland, in a church-state dialogue with An Taoiseach and other members of the Irish Government on 22nd January 2018. The agenda for the meeting included: migration, direct provision and overseas aid, the impact of Brexit on Ireland and Northern Ireland, abortion and the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution, homelessness, social housing and wider economic issues and education issues. The PCI delegation also had the privilege of meeting the Ceann Comhairle of Dáil Éireann to discuss opportunities for further engagement with the Oireachtas.

25. The Panel continues to oversee education matters in the Republic of Ireland. Last year the Panel reported on a submission made to the Department of Education and Skills on four possible options set out by the Minister that would have limited or removed the role of faith in determining admissions to oversubscribed faith-based schools. This submission, along with many others from schools, churches and individuals around the country, appears to have had a positive effect, as minority religion schools were excluded from the new catchment-area driven regulations (which, at the time of writing, are yet to be published or enforced).
26. The Panel will continue to monitor proposals by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) on structure and time allocation within the primary school curriculum, which would move religious education out of the core curriculum and into 'flexible time' alongside assembly time, roll call, breaks etc. A further consultation on this and other aspects of the primary school curriculum is expected in 2019. The Moderator and other representatives of faith-based school patrons have already written together to the NCCA to express concern that such proposals, if implemented, would damage the characteristic spirit of faith-based schools and undermine the value of religious education as an intellectually developmental learning experience.
27. Debate is well underway concerning the upcoming referendum on the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution. The Government has recently set out its proposals to repeal the Eighth Amendment and introduce legislation to permit, *inter alia*, abortion on request until the 12th week of pregnancy. The approach of the PCI to the referendum is set out in the report of the Eighth Amendment Task Group.
28. Conscious of the invaluable work done by PCI congregations throughout the Republic of Ireland, the Panel is keen to engage with elected representatives and others in civic society on migration and other important socio-economic issues on which the Church should be heard. To that end, the Panel has begun a conversation with colleagues in the Irish Council of Churches about how we work together with others to advocate on behalf of the most vulnerable people in our society.

DEALING WITH THE PAST PROJECT TASK GROUP

29. The Task Group's remit is to take forward the project agreed by the 2016 General Assembly to explore how Presbyterians responded to the Troubles. The aim is to tell a wider story than has been available to date, to recognise that which is good, and to reflect upon the times when Presbyterians failed to be faithful peacemakers.
30. Approximately one hundred and thirty replies were received to the letter sent out to active ministers in March 2017 seeking potential participants. The Task Group worked through the different categories of participants over the following months to identify interviewees.
31. In June 2017 Dr Jamie Yohanis was appointed by Queen's University Belfast as the research assistant on the project. The funding received from the Irish Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade was used to employ Dr Yohanis as a research assistant from June-December 2017. In that time, Dr Yohanis and Dr Gladys Ganiel conducted 106 interviews with 122 Presbyterians with a variety of experiences, including ordained ministers, security forces, victims and survivors, people from border areas, ex-combatants, emergency responders, health and social care workers, 'critical friends' from outside the PCI, and those who left Presbyterianism.
32. Dr Gladys Ganiel has already begun work on a book that will be a key research project output. Other proposed outputs include web resources, public events, reflective essays and educational resources for trainee ministers at Union Theological College and local congregations.
33. The public launch of the research will take place during 2019. Throughout the remainder of 2018 the Task Group will focus on planning the launch events and developing the other resources mentioned above.

TONY DAVIDSON, Convener

EIGHTH AMENDMENT TASK GROUP

34. The Task Group was established by the 2017 General Assembly with the following remit:
 - (a) To draw up a report and recommendations concerning the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution of Ireland – Bunreacht na hÉireann, to be presented to both the Council for Public Affairs and the General Council, with the General Council authorised, if necessary, to act on behalf of the Assembly in connection with any issue arising;
 - (b) To make submissions to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Eighth Amendment on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in

Ireland, following the approval of the General Council or, if time constraints do not permit such approval, as authorised by the Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly.

35. Part (b) of the Task Group's remit was not exercised, as the Joint Oireachtas Committee clarified that it would not take evidence from interest groups.
36. The Task Group met on three occasions to consider the position of the PCI on both abortion and the Constitution of Ireland, and to reflect on the political developments that occurred throughout the year.
37. During February and March 2018 the Government revealed proposals to repeal the Eighth Amendment and introduce legislation which will allow, *inter alia*, abortion on request up to twelve weeks of pregnancy and abortion on health grounds after twelve weeks. A referendum looks set to be held on 25th May 2018.
38. It was obvious to the Task Group that the PCI's position on abortion is much closer to that of the Constitution than it is to the proposals of the Government of Ireland. Moreover the Task Group established that the PCI does not approach the question of the Eighth Amendment from the standpoint of political or constitutional theory. The PCI is not committed to any generalised theological theory on constitutional and legislative socio-political order. The Task Group therefore concluded that:
 - (a) The most theologically consistent and practicable position for the PCI to adopt is that its position on abortion be applied flexibly in view of different political and constitutional arrangements obtaining in different jurisdictions;
 - (b) The decision on whether or not to support the Eighth Amendment must be a practical one, reached by considering the ramifications of such a decision and the alternative possibilities for legislation; and
 - (c) If the Eighth Amendment, particularly as understood and as complied with in political practice, more closely accords with the PCI's position than does an alternative politically viable possibility, the PCI may consistently support it.
39. The Task Group was also particularly conscious of the tragic effects of abortion on request in other jurisdictions where unborn life has been steadily devalued, and is deeply concerned that Ireland will follow a similar path if the Government's proposals are passed.
40. As there is currently no realistic possibility of protecting unborn life in accordance with our convictions by another political and legislative option, the Task Group recommended that the PCI supports the retention of the Eighth Amendment in the referendum debate.
41. Though the Task Group's primary task was to report on the political and legal aspects of the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution, the difficult situations facing women and their families have been at the forefront of members' minds. In our congregations and in the wider

community there are women facing pregnancy crisis and profound loss who need help and support. During its discussions the Task Group heard moving accounts of pain and loss, and examples of where further care and support could be provided. The Task Group therefore further recommended that a Task Group be established by the most appropriate Council of the Church to review and develop our pastoral care for women and families affected by pregnancy crisis, pregnancy loss, the diagnosis of a life-limiting condition and other related circumstances, and that this should include support for those caring for children and young people with disabilities.

42. Both recommendations were supported by the Council for Public Affairs and adopted by the General Council at their March meetings.

TREVOR MORROW, Convener

APPENDIX 1

EUTHANASIA AND ASSISTED SUICIDE

Introduction

1. Euthanasia and assisted suicide are currently illegal in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. In recent years, a number of high-profile ‘right to die’ cases have reignited debate about end of life issues, including whether doctors should be permitted to assist a patient to commit suicide.
2. The purpose of this paper is to help the General Assembly to set out its views on euthanasia and assisted suicide.

3. Definitions

- (a) **Assisted dying** is a euphemism used by campaigners for legal change to refer to physician-assisted suicide. It is sometimes used to include also physician-administered euthanasia.
- (b) **Assisted suicide** is assistance provided by one person to another to enable the latter to end his or her life.
- (c) **Euthanasia** literally means ‘good death’ but has become almost exclusively applied to the deliberate ending of life.
- (d) **Palliative care** is the multi-disciplinary branch of health care which specialises in alleviating the pain or other suffering arising from incurable illness. It comprises specialist medicine, nursing, physiotherapy and psychological and spiritual care.
- (e) **Physician-administered euthanasia** is the administration of lethal drugs to a patient by a doctor in order to end that patient’s life. PAE may be with or without the patient’s request or consent.

- (f) **Physician-assisted suicide** is assistance with suicide provided by a physician. The doctor provides the means – the drugs, apparatus and technical knowledge – but the patient initiates the final event.
- (g) **Voluntary euthanasia** is the intentional killing of a patient at the patient's request.¹

4. **The Legal Position**

(a) **Northern Ireland**

Euthanasia and assisted suicide are illegal in Northern Ireland. Guidance by the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) for Northern Ireland issued in 2010 states:

- A person commits an offence under section 13 of the Criminal Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 1966 if he or she does an act capable of encouraging or assisting the suicide or attempted suicide of another person, and that act was intended to encourage or assist suicide or an attempt at suicide.²

The offence of encouraging or assisting suicide carries a maximum penalty of 14 years' imprisonment. However, in its policy document on assisted suicide, the PPS states that 'it has never been the rule that a prosecution will automatically follow where the evidential test of the Test for Prosecution is satisfied'.³ The PPS will look at each individual case to ascertain whether a prosecution should be brought and will consider a number of factors, including the motivation and actions of the person who has assisted a suicide.

The law has been described as having 'a stern face but an understanding heart' in that it upholds the illegality of assisting suicide as an important deterrent but has the discretion to look at the circumstances of each case.⁴

(b) **Republic of Ireland**

Euthanasia and assisted suicide are also illegal under Irish law. Section 2(2) of the Criminal Law (Suicide) Act 1993 states:

A person who aids, abets, counsels or procures the suicide of another, or an attempt by another to commit suicide, shall be

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1. This is not an exhaustive list of definitions. For further discussion see the Living and Dying Well think tank website (www.livinganddyingwell.org.uk/about/glossary) and John Wyatt, *Matters of Life and Death: Human dilemmas in the light of the Christian faith*, Inter-Varsity Press, 2009, pp.192-197.
 2. 'Policy on Prosecuting the Offence of Assisted Suicide', Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland, February 2010, p.1.
 3. *Ibid.*, p 5.
 4. Robert Preston, remarks at PCI's 'Living and Dying Well' conference, 22nd January 2015.

*guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding fourteen years.*⁵

The Director of Public Prosecutions has not issued guidelines on assisted suicide, however, in a 2013 judgement the High Court noted that “the very fact that UK guidelines on assisted suicide now exist must surely inform any exercise of discretion by the Director in this jurisdiction.”⁶ The Court went on to say that:

*... where reliable evidence of compliance with a list of factors, such as those specified in the U.K. Prosecutors guidelines, is presented to the Director ex post facto the event... She is then free to apply her discretion and make a fully informed decision about whether or not to initiate a prosecution... The Court feels sure that the Director, in this of all cases, would exercise her discretion in a humane and sensitive fashion, while it would stress that, of course, she must retain the full ambit of that discretion to decide whether to prosecute or not. The timing and sequencing involved in this approach leaves intact the legislative framework which underlines and upholds the pre-eminent right to life as enshrined in the Constitution... It also protects against the ‘slippery slope’ dangers identified in all of the cases whereby elderly or ill persons might be induced or otherwise coaxed or manipulated into seeking prematurely to terminate their own lives.*⁷

The Fleming case concerned a woman, Marie Fleming, who suffered from multiple sclerosis and applied to the High Court for a declaration that her husband could lawfully assist her to commit suicide. She was unsuccessful, and in a subsequent appeal the Supreme Court upheld the High Court’s decision, ruling that there is no explicit right to commit suicide, or to determine the time of one’s death, in the Constitution.⁸ The Court noted, however, that the Oireachtas has the option of legislating in this area and the courts could then determine whether the legislation is constitutional, based on any safeguards included.⁹

5. **Examples of international practice**

Euthanasia and/or assisted suicide are legal in a number of states.

(a) **Belgium**

Euthanasia was legalised in Belgium in 2002. The relevant Act confirmed that ‘a physician who performs euthanasia commits no criminal offence when he/she ensures that:

5. www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1993/act/11/enacted/en/print

6. *Fleming v Ireland and Ors* [2013] IEHC 2, para 171.

7. *Ibid.*, para 175.

8. *Fleming v Ireland and Ors* [2013] IESC 19, para 99.

9. *Ibid.*, paras 107-108.

- (i) The patient has attained the age of majority or is an emancipated minor, and is legally competent and conscious at the moment of making the request;
- (ii) The request is voluntary, well-considered and repeated, and is not the result of any external pressure;
- (iii) The patient is in a medically futile condition of constant and unbearable physical or mental suffering that cannot be alleviated, resulting from a serious and incurable disorder caused by illness or accident.¹⁰

Between 2002 and 2015, 12,726 people were euthanised in Belgium. Numbers have been steadily climbing, reaching 2,022 cases in 2015.¹¹ In 2014 and 2015, cancer was the main condition for which people asked to be euthanised (67.7%). This was followed by cases of multiple pathologies, which has been interpreted as the ‘coexistence of several serious and incurable disorders’. These are not necessarily fatal. Examples given by the Federal Commission for Euthanasia Control and Evaluation include disorders of gait and mobility due to osteoporosis, hearing impairment and the onset of dementia.¹²

(b) **The Netherlands**

Euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide were legalised in the Netherlands in 2002 by the Termination of Life on Request and Assisted Suicide (Review Procedures) Act:

In the words of ‘the Act’, the questions that must be asked include the following. Was the physician satisfied that the patient’s request was voluntary and well-considered and that their suffering was unbearable, without prospect of improvement? Did the physician come to the conclusion, together with the patient, that there was no reasonable alternative in the patient’s situation?¹³

In 2016 the Dutch Euthanasia Review Committees received 6,091 notifications of euthanasia or assisted suicide, 4% of the total number of people who died in the Netherlands that year. 83% of cases concerned patients with cancer, neurological disorders (such as Parkinson’s disease, multiple sclerosis and motor neurone disease), cardiovascular disease or pulmonary disease. Around 2% of cases concerned patients with dementia and around 1% concerned patients with a psychiatric disorder.¹⁴

10. ‘The Belgian Act on Euthanasia of May, 28th 2002’, *Ethical Perspectives* 9 (2002), 2-3, p.182.

11. European Institute of Bioethics, *Analysis of The Seventh Report of the Federal Commission for Euthanasia Control and Evaluation to the Legislative Chambers* (for the Years 2014 and 2015), October 2016, p.1.

12. *Ibid.*, pp.3-4.

13. Regional Euthanasia Review Committees, Annual Report 2016, p.4.

14. *Ibid.*

(c) **Oregon, United States**

Physician-assisted suicide was legalised in Oregon in 1997. According to the Oregon Health Authority:

Oregon's Death with Dignity Act (DWDA), enacted in late 1997, allows terminally ill adult Oregonians to obtain and use prescriptions from their physicians for self-administered, lethal doses of medications.¹⁵

The legislation states:

*An adult who is capable, is a resident of Oregon, and has been determined by the attending physician and consulting physician to be suffering from a terminal disease, and who has voluntarily expressed his or her wish to die, may make a written request for medication for the purpose of ending his or her life in a humane and dignified manner in accordance with ORS 127.800 to 127.897.*¹⁶

As of January 2017, the Oregon Health Authority had received reports of 133 people who had died in 2016 from ingesting the medications prescribed under the Act. A total of 1,127 people had died in this manner from 1997.¹⁷

6. Arguments put forward for changing the law(a) **Fear of suffering and dependence**

Fear is one of the great driving forces for legal change. Some of the main reasons people seek assisted suicide or euthanasia are captured in a recent report by the Public Health Department of Washington State, where physician-assisted suicide has been legal since 2009. Among the end of life concerns of those who died in 2016 were loss of autonomy (87%), loss of dignity (66%), being a burden on family, friends and/or caregivers (51%) and inadequate pain control or concern about it (41%).¹⁸

In the 1990s, the focus of debate around changing the law was on people dying in terrible, uncontrollable pain. With advances in medical science, palliative care and pain control, the focus has shifted to neurodegenerative conditions that lead to a loss of control and dependence. In one of the most recent cases to reach the High Court of England and Wales, a leading campaigner with motor neurone disease, explained:

15. Oregon Death with Dignity Act, Data Summary 2016, Oregon Health Authority, February 2017, p.4.

16. www.oregon.gov/oha/ph/providerpartnerresources/evaluationresearch/deathwithdignityact/pages/ors.aspx

17. *Ibid.*, p.5.

18. 2016 Death with Dignity Act Report, Washington State Department of Health, September 2017, p.8.

*I do not wish to get to a stage where my quality of life is so limited, in the last six months of life, that I am no longer able to find any enjoyment in it. This disease is a relentless and merciless process of progressive deterioration. At some point, my breathing will stop altogether or I will become so helpless that I will be effectively entombed in my own body. I would not like to live like this. I would find it a totally undignified state for me to live in. I find the prospect of this state for me to live quite unacceptable and I wish to end my life when I feel it is the right moment to do so, in a way that is swift and dignified...*¹⁹

Cancer is the most common condition affecting people who choose euthanasia or assisted suicide where it is legal. Despite the significant advances in end of life care, fear of pain, uncertainty and loss of control remains an important factor in efforts to change the law in Ireland, the UK and elsewhere.

(b) **Personal autonomy**

“Most of all, I believe in a person’s right to determine their own life and the manner of ending it, as that is a sovereign principle. We each own our lives and no one else defines that for us.”
Chloe Smith MP

The ‘right’ to self-determination is propelling the drive for assisted suicide and euthanasia in the West. Professor John Wyatt notes:

*The last 50 years have seen a striking rise in radical libertarian concepts of personal autonomy. The right to self-determination has been enshrined in a succession of legal judgements and changes in primary legislation... To modern thinkers autonomy has become the freedom to do whatever I wish and whenever I wish, without any requirement for rational or moral justification. And it seems self-evident to many that the right to self-determination must include the right to self-destruction.*²⁰

To many people, it seems outrageous that they can control almost every aspect of their life but are not allowed to control the manner and timing of their death.

(c) **Social and economic factors**

In 2008 Baroness Mary Warnock caused controversy when she argued in favour of medical killing as a socially responsible option:

If you’re demented, you’re wasting people’s lives – your family’s lives – and you’re wasting the resources of the National Health Service... if somebody absolutely, desperately wants to die because

19. R (Conway) v The Secretary of State for Justice [2017] EWHC 2447 (Admin), www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/r-conway-v-ssj-art-8-right-to-die-20171006.pdf

20. John Wyatt, ‘Euthanasia and assisted suicide’, *Cambridge Papers*, volume 19, no. 2, June 2010, p.2.

*they're a burden to their family, or the state, then I think they too should be allowed to die.*²¹

It has also been suggested that, as people live longer with increasingly complex medical conditions, they should be allowed to end their lives to free up the time and resources of the state, family and friends.

7. Potential harms

(a) Placing vulnerable people in danger

Many people, especially older people, are already vulnerable to malicious actions by others. Research has suggested that over 23,000 older people in Northern Ireland have experienced serious physical, mental or financial abuse.²² A 2010 report by the Republic of Ireland's Health Service Executive, National Centre for the Protection of Older People and University College Dublin estimated that 10,000 people over the age of 65 had experienced mistreatment,²³ and in 2014 the HSE's Elder Abuse Service received 2,592 referrals.²⁴

In many cases abuse is perpetrated by family or carers, often motivated by financial gain. It would be naive and irresponsible to think that such people would not seek to exploit a change in the law. Moreover, many older or disabled people would feel pressurised to 'do the decent thing' to stop themselves 'being a burden' to others. It is not hard to see how 'you can take this route' could quickly become the norm that 'you should take this route'. This concern has already been expressed by many individuals who are dependent on others for care. Changing the law to allow euthanasia and/or assisted suicide would undoubtedly place increased numbers of vulnerable people in danger of harm.

(b) A mind shift from healing to killing

If we concede that people have a right to die in certain circumstances it follows that society has a duty to provide the means for their death, if they cannot arrange it for themselves. This responsibility would pass to the medical profession. Doctors would be called upon to decide when the death of a patient would be appropriate, and, if they were not directly arranging the death themselves, they may have a duty to authorise others to help with, or administer the fatal procedure. Under the guise of compassion we would be introducing a drastic change to the

21. Mary Warnock, *Daily Telegraph*, 19th September 2008.

22. 23,000 elderly people abused in Northern Ireland every year, says charity, *Belfast Telegraph*, 13th September 2017

23. *Abuse and Neglect of Older People in Ireland: Report Summary*, UCD, NCPOP and HSE, 2010, p.4.

24. *Open Your Eyes: HSE Elder Abuse Services 2014*, HSE, 2014, p.45.

values of our society – particularly a presumption in favour of life – and distorting the traditional role of medicine from its mission of healing and treating pain and discomfort. If assisted and/or euthanasia is normalised the underlying social dynamic will change. Laws are not just regulatory instruments; they communicate values and norms. The message that would be sent in this case is that if you are sick or old and a burden, ending your life is something you ought to consider.

(c) **Deciding when the unbearable is unbearable**

There is also severe risk and insurmountable difficulty in seeking to define how unbearable a person's life must be before the state agrees that assisted suicide or euthanasia is appropriate. Just as we are all different in our abilities to cope with pain and indignity, what might be an unacceptable quality of life for one person could well be accepted by someone else. Perhaps we could simply rely on the wishes of the person concerned, but would our society really be content to arrange the death of people who simply considered that they were too old or unhappy to live? How would society decide when reasons for requesting assisted suicide or euthanasia are unacceptable? The most recent report of the Netherlands' Regional Euthanasia Review Committees (RTE) states:

Opinions differ widely on whether it should in future be made possible to receive assistance with suicide if patients regard their life as 'completed', without there being a medical dimension to their suffering (which falls outside the current legal framework). In many cases where patients are suffering from multiple geriatric syndromes, they phrase their euthanasia request in terms of being 'finished with life' or state that they regard their life as 'completed'. Can a boundary be drawn between 'multiple geriatric syndromes' and 'completed life' that is practicable for both physicians and patients?...These questions are also the subject of intense discussions in the RTE... it could be beneficial to patients and their loved ones, physicians performing euthanasia, independent physicians and society at large if they could obtain greater legal certainty than the RTE can give.²⁵

It is hard to see how these questions could ever have a clear answer and it is easy to see how the scope of legalisation could continue to grow and grow, particularly if personal autonomy is used as moral justification for suicide.

8. **Our approach as Christians**

It is a bleak fact that pain, suffering, distress and death itself are inevitable parts of human life. Even if we happen to escape serious illness or injury during our lives we will always know someone who

25. Regional Euthanasia Review Committees, 2016, pp.6-7.

will have to endure the circumstances we fear the most. In contrast to the view that all suffering is merely a pointless and destructive threat to individual autonomy, Christians, while being alive to the realities of pain, disease and injury in human lives, believe that God can transform suffering for His own good ends. For example, Christian ethicist Stanley Hauerwas argues that suffering is a call to live in community:

*It is the burden of those who care for the suffering to know how to teach the suffering that they are not thereby excluded from the human community. In this sense, medicine's primary role is to bind the suffering and the non-suffering into the same community.*²⁶

Compassion for our fellow human beings means that we are bound to support efforts made to reduce pain and enable healing, and have a duty to help people to die in as comfortable and peaceful ways as we can. That is the spirit behind the development of palliative care (pioneered almost entirely by Christians) which “is a striking demonstration of the belief that the process of dying need not be one of devastating loss and despair.”²⁷

As Christians, we should not be constrained by the cultural taboo but should be able and willing to consider what it means to die well. This will mean facing up to the fact that our beliefs about the sanctity of life do not mean prolongation of painful life at all costs. Christians have long accepted the propriety of medical interventions designed to relieve pain which may unintentionally shorten life. This distinction between intention and foresight must be handled very carefully but is both valid and important. There is an important difference between doing something that is intended to end the life of the person concerned and taking action which has a high probability of shortening the person's life but which is intended to deal with pain rather than cause death.

Some, of course, would argue that we should go further than simply give care and attempt to relieve pain. They believe that there are situations when we should actively take steps to end the life of the person who is suffering on the grounds that life has become too unbearable to continue. If they are right, then we have a duty to kill, or, at least, help bring about the death of people who suffer in this way and wish to end their lives.

However, in Christian thinking, our lives are not only given by God but are also a reflection of His being. We are made by God in His image and reflect His character. Our emphasis on the value of human life has nothing to do with physical or mental ‘perfection’, nor with added value in economic terms, or economic cost. A human being's value does not lie in what he or she can do but exists simply because of what and who they are. This is one crucially important reason why we value and seek to care for those with disabilities of all kinds. The dignity and worth of individual life cannot be derived simply from an analysis by

26. Stanley Hauerwas, *Suffering Presence*, T&T Clark, 1986, p.26.

27. Wyatt, 2010, p.5.

an individual of the value of his or her own life. Thus the offence of taking human life is explicitly linked to with the indwelling image of God (Genesis 9:6). Intentional killing (as in euthanasia, assisted suicide and abortion) is wrong because it violates a profound moral order that human life really does matter and has innate value.

Furthermore, the way of Jesus Christ seems to imply a firm conviction that the timing of our deaths should be left to God. The Apostle Paul earnestly believed that for him to live was Christ and to die would be gain (Philippians 1:21), that he would rather be absent from the body and present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8), but he was convinced that the decision was for God to make, not himself (Philippians 1:22-26). The fact is, we do not belong to ourselves, we have been bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). We can never really know what work God has to complete even in a person whose mind seems to be utterly confused or who is barely conscious because of sedation to relieve pain.

As human beings made for relationship with God and each other, we also have to recognise our interdependence. What we do affects others and what others do affects us. It is indeed true that “no man is an island”. This is very important to keep in mind as we consider the possible legalisation of euthanasia and assisted suicide, and the very real dangers that would be created for vulnerable people. As Christians commanded to love our neighbours, we cannot view this as a matter of a ‘sovereign principle’ at work, self-determination or economic value. Rather, we must value the systemic protection of the weak and vulnerable over the sheer maximisation of individual autonomy.

9. **Conclusion**

The current laws on assisted suicide and the guidance that has been given for their administration continue to provide a fair, balanced and compassionate approach to a difficult and complex issue. Christians should resist the legalisation of assisted suicide and euthanasia while urging government and wider society to adopt the other options that are available for the alleviation of pain and suffering. Resources must be given generously to support palliative care research and delivery because of the need and vulnerability of those affected. Facilities like the Hospice Movement must be encouraged. Above all, the Christian community should take the lead in showing the prayerful, dignified, respectful care which assures people that they are valued and loved, even in the midst of pain and helplessness.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the General Assembly express deep concern and frustration about the prolonged absence of an Executive in Northern Ireland, the resulting stagnation in public policy and the negative effects on the most vulnerable in society, and repeat their call for all involved in the political process to find a resolution that establishes good and stable government based on good working relationships.
2. That the General Assembly note with concern the sense of disillusionment and low morale amongst governors, principals and teachers, caused by the financial situation in schools and the uncertainty for the future of education in Northern Ireland, and therefore call upon politicians if necessary to set aside their differences to enable an Executive to be formed to bring about both democratic accountability and strong leadership that will provide the clarity so urgently needed on an agreed way forward for the education system in the province.
3. That the General Assembly believe that Religious Education has a very important role to play in the spiritual, moral and intellectual development of children and young people, and therefore affirm the place of RE within school curricula and encourage time-tabling and resourcing of RE which reflect its fundamental value to school life.
4. That the General Assembly:
 - (a) strongly oppose any legislation which allows assisted suicide and/or euthanasia; and
 - (b) strongly commend palliative care, calling on the governments in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to ensure the adequate resourcing of both research and delivery in this important area.
5. That the report of the Council for Public Affairs be received.

LINKAGE COMMISSION

Convener: Rev WJ HENRY

Secretary: TJ LIVINGSTONE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report summarises the work of the Union Commission from April 2017-March 2018. Matters dealt with include the terms of leaves to call granted to 28 charges, the reviews of the financial terms in various leaves to call, and reports on the work of the internal Panels of the Commission.

Guidance for Interviews

2. Two options for interviews at vacancies had been presented by the Commission to the General Assembly of 2016 – one which permitted only interview by Kirk Session and a second which permitted interview also by Hearing Committees. It was the second option of the Guidelines for Interviews which were adopted, allowing for interviews by Hearing Committee. However, at the 2017 General Assembly, the Commission was asked to reconsider the phrasing of some aspects of the guidelines, again taking particular note of the desire of local congregations to express every member ministry. Opinions were sought from interested parties and an amended form of these guidelines is now presented (Appendix A).

Congregational Mission Plans

3. Since the former Board of Mission in Ireland had facilitated the production of congregational mission plans, the Commission has been required by the Assembly to receive these as part of the paperwork to be considered at the time a congregation seeks leave to call. These have been useful in giving an insight into the life and heartbeat of congregations over most of that period. However, increasingly the Commission has found that many of these plans are now so badly out of date (even should a keen Vacancy Convener initiate an update) that their usefulness is limited.
4. After reflection upon the new Consultation process for Congregations, the Commission felt that a lot of the perspectives found in mission plans are highlighted through this updated scheme. Additionally the Commission does not want to add to the burdens already experienced at presbytery level by adding more needless bureaucracy to produce extra documentation. The Commission has decided that mission plans are no longer required (from September 2018) at the time of seeking

leave to call: many of the answers that are required can already be accessed from responses submitted through Presbytery Consultations. Accordingly a new presbytery comment form has been devised which seeks answers to missional questions which would be available through the Consultation process. At present, this is only beginning, but over time all congregations will be covered. This will give the Commission the information it requires without too much additional workload upon presbytery.

Protracted Illness guidelines

5. These guidelines were updated during the year and are printed in Appendix B.

Parish bounds

6. Historically Parish Bounds were dealt with by Synods, but since their passing it is possible that, with changes due to amalgamations etc that the alterations which might be necessary (and reported to General Assembly) could be overlooked. Certainly, there are several congregations for which the General Secretary's Department has no up to date information concerning Parish Bounds. Accordingly the Commission has established a Parish Bounds Panel whose initial task is to ensure that bounds are in order, and where it considers there are some issues, to address these, and inform the Assembly. Work has begun by consulting Synod and Assembly minutes.

Termination of Licensed Assistantships

7. During the year the date of eligibility of Licensed Assistants was changed to 1st September; and similarly the date at which an assistantship will end, if no call has been received, is 31st August. Recognising that few calls will be issued over July/August, it has been decided that central funds will cover a further month as a period of grace to allow more time wherein a call might be processed. This simply mirrors practice which was followed previously, but then, over January.

Licensed Assistants Expenses and Housing Allowance

8. Following the changes to the Minister's Expenses Scheme from April 2018, the Ministerial Studies and Development Committee of the Council for Training in Ministry considered it good practice to ensure that payments given to Licentiate Assistants should be made in a similarly transparent manner which would satisfy the tax authorities in both jurisdictions. At this time it was also noted that the housing allowance paid to assistants had not been altered in over 30 years (half of this has been paid by CMF). After consultation with the Commission, it has been decided that housing allowances should cease, and that payments to assistants should mirror those made to ministers with the creation of a similar ministerial duties allowance alongside a car allowance. Half of the ministerial duties allowance will be paid

from CMF. It is not anticipated that any Licensed Assistant will be worse off under the new scheme, nor that congregations or CMF will have a significantly greater financial outlay to make. However, for the future, the amounts will be linked in percentage terms to the figures set each year for allowances payable to ministers, and so they will have the same potential to rise.

Leave To Call a Minister

9. This is only a summary- there may well be conditions attached to the Leave to Call, which are not recorded here. These might include Part-time, Reviewable Tenure, Restricted List, additional income for Minister etc. When a figure is set the year denotes when Leave to Call was granted. This figure will increase automatically under the annual Stipend Review. Expenses are 'initial ministerial expenses' which were set in respect to all Leave to Call figures issued up and until March 2018. From April 2018 Expenses have been replaced by Allowances and are paid as per the system agreed at the 2017 General Assembly.

Congregation	Stipend	Expenses
Milford	€13,000 (2017)	€3,996
Fannet	€9,000 (2017)	€3,536
Rathmullan	€9,000 (2017)	€2,600
Second Islandmagee	£12,800 (2017)	£3,000
Rathcoole	£A.M.M. (2017)	£7,500
Alexandra	£A.M.M. (2017)	£7,500
First Ballynahinch	£29,000 (2017) or £A.M.M.	£7,500
St. Columba's Lisburn	£17,500 (2017)	£6,000
First Bailieborough	€12,500 (2017)	€4,000
Trinity, Bailieborough	€13,500 (2017)	€4,000
Corraneary	€6,000 (2017)	€2,000
Ervey	€3,500 (2017)	€1,000
First Castleblayney	€12,455 (2017)	€3,975
Frankford	€6,345 (2017)	€2,025
Corvally	€4,700 (2017)	€1,500
Fintona	60% £A.M.M. (2017)	£4,500
Ballynahatty and Creevan	40% £A.M.M. (2017)	£3,000
Castlerock	66.66% £A.M.M. (2017)	£4,800
Trinity, Ballymoney	£37,000 (2017)	£7,500
Harmony Hill, Lisburn	£38,000 (2017)	£7,500
First Monaghan	75% €B.M.M. (2017)	€7,500
Smithborough	25% €B.M.M. (2017)	€2,500

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Second Randalstown	£30,000 (2017)	£7,500
Woodburn	60% £A.M.M. (2017)	£4,800
Loughmourne	40% £A.M.M. (2017)	£2,880
Downshire, Carrickfergus	£A.M.M. (2017)	£7,500
Cloughwater	£27,000 (2017)	£7,700
Cregagh	£34,000 (2017)	£7,500
Aghada	€5,147 (2017)	€1,500
Trinity, Cork	€18,219 (2017)	€6,000
First Cookstown	£34,500 (2017)	£7,500
First Dromara	£30,000 (2017)	£7,500
Annalong	£34,000 (2017)	£7,500
Waringstown	£38,000 (2017)	£7,500
First Newry (Sandys Street)	£A.M.M. (2017)	£7,500
Ravenhill	£A.M.M. (2018)	£7,500
First Coleraine	£38,400 (2018)	£7,500
Orangefield	£40,000 (2018)	£7,500
Mullingar	€12,000 (2018)	€1,600
Corboy	€4,000 (2018)	€800
Trinity, Ballygowan	£40,000 (2018)	£7,500

The following congregations were granted leave to call under the new scheme for minister's allowances

Whitehouse	£31,000 (2018)
Car Allowance:	£3,600
Minister's Taxable Allowance:	£2,400

Second Newtownhamilton	£12,000 (2018)
Creggan	£8,000 (2018)
Shared costs set at 85% of the full allowance:	
Car Allowance:	£3,600
Minister's Taxable Allowance:	£2,400

Associate Ministry

Hamilton Road, Bangor	£A.M.M. (2017)	£3,600
Cunningham Memorial	£A.M.M. (2017)	£4,600
First Holywood	£A.M.M. (2018)	
Car Allowance:	£3,600	
Associate's Taxable Allowance:	£2,000	

Reviewable Tenure Ministries

10. Reviewable Tenure Ministry in Living Room, North Belfast Presbytery, was terminated.
11. Reviewable Tenure Ministry in Clontibret and Middletown was extended for seven years from 26th September 2017.
12. Reviewable Tenure Ministry in Dunluce. The Congregation was released from any tenure restriction from 27th February 2018.
13. Reviewable Tenure Ministry in Toberkeigh was extended for seven years from 27th February 2018.

Stated Supply Arrangements

14. During the past year the Commission has renewed a number of previous nominations for a further period in co-operation with the appropriate Presbytery. New Stated supply arrangements in Ballyblack, Boyle and Second Donegore were effected.

DISSOLUTION OF LINKAGES

15. During the year one Linage was dissolved.
First Castleblaney, Frankford and Corvally and Ervey. The Linkage was dissolved on 27th June 2017.

CONGREGATIONS LINKED

16. During the year 3 new Linkages were agreed.

First and Second Islandmagee

Terms of Linkage

- (a) That the congregations of First Islandmagee and Second Islandmagee be linked as from 1st September 2017 or some other appropriate date.
- (b) Each congregation shall maintain its separate identity with its own Kirk Session, Congregational Committee and Finances.
- (c) Each congregation shall have the right to appoint representatives to the Superior Courts of the Church.
- (d) In the choice of a Minister the two congregations shall act as one congregation and the two Kirk Sessions as one Kirk Session.
- (e) There shall be stated services each Sunday as follows: First Islandmagee at 11.30am and Second Islandmagee at 10am or at such other times as the two Kirk Sessions acting together shall determine.
- (f) That the Stipends (2017) be: First Islandmagee £19,200 and Second Islandmagee £12,800; and initial ministerial expenses: First Islandmagee £4,500 and Second Islandmagee £3,000.

- (g) That Holiday Supplies, and other shared expenses not included in (f) be borne in the proportions 3/5th First Islandmagee and 2/5th Second Islandmagee.
- (h) That Rent, Rates, Taxes and Maintenance of the Manse (or residence for the minister) be borne in the proportions 3/5th First Islandmagee and 2/5th Second Islandmagee.
 - (i) That the minister shall reside in First Islandmagee Manse.
 - (ii) That the directions of the Linkage Commission be observed in respect of the Manse and Manse property at Second Islandmagee.

The new revised Stipends in the linked charge created would be payable upon installation of the Minister of First Islandmagee in Second Islandmagee.

First Bailieborough, Trinity Bailieborough, Corraneary and Ervey

Terms of Linkage

- (a) That the congregations of First Bailieborough, Trinity Bailieborough, Corraneary and Ervey be linked from 27th June 2017.
- (b) Each congregation shall have the right to appoint representatives to the Superior Courts of the Church.
- (c) In the choice of a Minister the four congregations shall act as one congregation and the four Kirk Sessions as one Kirk Session.
- (d) There shall be stated services each Sunday as follows: First Bailieborough 10.30a.m. (1st and 3rd Sundays), Trinity Bailieborough 10.30a.m. (2nd and 4th Sundays); Ervey 12 noon (1st and 3rd Sundays), Corraneary 12 noon (2nd and 4th Sundays); on the 5th Sunday a united service will be held on an alphabetical rotation; or at such other times as the four Kirk Sessions acting together shall determine provided any permanent change to the times of stated services is approved by the Presbytery.
- (e) That the Stipends [2017] be:
 - (i) Trinity Bailieborough €13,500;
 - (ii) First Bailieborough €12,500;
 - (iii) Corraneary €6,000;
 - (iv) Ervey €3,500.
- (f) That initial minimum expenses be:
 - (i) Trinity Bailieborough €4,000;
 - (ii) First Bailieborough €4,000;
 - (iii) Corraneary €2,000;
 - (iv) Ervey €1,000.

- (g) The Minister shall reside in First Bailieborough Manse. That Rent, Rates, Taxes and Maintenance of the Manse be borne in the proportions:
 - (i) Trinity Bailieborough 38%;
 - (ii) First Bailieborough 35%;
 - (iii) Corraneary 17%;
 - (iv) Ervey 10%.
- (h) That Holiday Supplies, and other shared expenses not included in the total expenses allowance be borne in the proportions:
 - (i) Trinity Bailieborough 38%;
 - (ii) First Bailieborough 35%;
 - (iii) Corraneary 17%;
 - (iv) Ervey 10%.

First Castleblaney, Frankford and Corvally

Terms of Linkage

- (a) That the congregations of First Castleblaney, Frankford and Corvally be linked from 27th June 2017.
- (b) Each congregation shall have the right to appoint representatives to the Superior Courts of the Church.
- (c) In the choice of a Minister the three congregations shall act as one congregation and the three Kirk Sessions as one Kirk Session.
- (d) There shall be stated services each Sunday as follows: Corvally 10.30am; First and Second Sundays of each month in Frankford at noon; Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays in First Castleblaney at noon; or at such other times as the three Kirk Sessions acting together shall determine provided any permanent change to the times of stated services is approved by the Presbytery.
- (e) That the Stipends [2017] be:
 - (i) First Castleblaney €12,455;
 - (ii) Frankford €6,345;
 - (iii) Corvally €4,700.*
- (f) That initial minimum expenses be:
 - (i) First Castleblaney €3,975;
 - (ii) Frankford €2,025;
 - (iii) Corvally €1,500.*
- (g) The Minister shall reside in First Castleblaney Manse. That Rent, Rates, Taxes and Maintenance of the Manse be borne in the proportions:
 - (i) First Castleblaney 53%;
 - (ii) Frankford 27%;
 - (iii) Corvally 20%.

- (h) That Holiday Supplies, and other shared expenses not included in the total expenses allowance be borne in the proportions (i) First Castleblayney 53%, (ii) Frankford 27%, (iii) Corvally 20%,

*The above figures for stipend and expenses reflect the fact that leave to call was sought at 60% Part-time.

CONGREGATIONS AMALGAMATED

Cloughey and Greyabbey

17. The 2017 General Assembly resolved as follows: *That the congregation of Cloughey be amalgamated with the congregation of Greyabbey on 1st July, 2017 or other suitable date, on terms set by the Linkage Commission; and that the Linkage Commission, in consultation with the Presbytery of Ards, bring recommendations to the 2018 General Assembly concerning parish bounds for the amalgamated congregation, and for neighbouring congregations.*

Terms of Amalgamation

- (a) That the congregation of Cloughey be amalgamated with the congregation of Greyabbey under the name Greyabbey, the date of amalgamation to be no later than 31st December 2017, (as agreed by the Presbytery of Ards in consultation with the Linkage Commission), on the following terms:
- (b) That the two Congregational Committees become one Congregational Committee until new Committee elections are held.
- (c) The assets to be dispersed are defined as Cloughey Church building, Halls and surrounding grounds, Cloughey Old Church and Graveyard, any other property owned by Cloughey congregation and any investments and bank accounts in the name of Cloughey Congregation.
- (d) Dispersal of Assets:
- (i) Cloughey Old Church, Graveyard and curtilage to become the sole property and responsibility of Portavogie Congregation.
- (ii) Church building, Halls and surrounding grounds, and any other property owned by Cloughey (other than the old church and graveyard previously mentioned), to transfer to Greyabbey Congregation;
- (e) That all future assets, including legacies and bequests subsequent to the amalgamation, become the property of the amalgamated congregation.
- (f) That the amalgamated congregation will remain responsible for any Cloughey liabilities following dispersal of the assets (other than those pertaining to Cloughey old Church and graveyard which become the liability of Portavogie).

Greyabbey Parish boundary

18. The Commission in conjunction with the Presbytery of Ards recommends the following revised parish boundary for (the amalgamated congregation of) Greyabbey:

From Millar's Corner on the Portaferry Road (542705) along the Mountstewart Road and Cardy Road to Cardy (587705) thence along Cardy Road East to Dunover Road (594704) thence along Dunover Road to its junction with Tullykevin Road (604704) thence along Tullykevin Road to its junction with Ballywalter Road (606682) thence westwards along Ballywalter Road to its junction with Blackabbey Road (600682) thence along Blackabbey Road to its junction with Inishargy Road at St. Andrew's (C. of I.) church (621658) thence along Inishargy Road to its junction with an unnamed Road (608653) leading to Herring Bay thence by that unnamed Road to Herring Bay (588653).

By the sea from Kearney (650518) to the Pumping Station (opposite Green Island) (655586) thence by a straight line to the Bog Road at (647593) thence along Bog Road to its junction with Rubane Road (636593) thence along Rubane Road through Six Road Ends to where the Blackstaff River crosses the Rubane Road (628603) thence along the Blackstaff River to Saltwater Bridge (603591) and Strangford Lough to a point opposite the junction of the Rowreagh, Deerpark and Loughdoo Roads (590567) thence along the Loughdoo Road to Nun's Bridge (623553) thence along Ballygalget Road to its junction with Ardminnen Road (628532) thence along Ardminnen Road to its junction with Newcastle Road (641537) thence along Newcastle Road to its junction with Kearney Road (643515) and thence along Kearney Road to Kearney (650518).

REVIEWS, EXPENSES AND FEES PANEL

Mr James Livingstone reports:

Reviews

19. In accordance with Par 236(2) of the Code, and arising out of other circumstances, the Reviews, Expenses and Fees Panel reviewed the stipend of the following Congregations:

Congregation	Stipend
ARDS PRESBYTERY	
Ballyholme	No Change
ARMAGH PRESBYTERY	
Redrock and	No Change
Druminnis	No Change

BALLYMENA PRESBYTERY

Wellington No Change

NORTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY

Carnmoney No Change

Seaview No Change

SOUTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY

Fitzroy No Change

Townsend Street No Change

EAST BELFAST PRESBYTERY

Christ Church, Dundonald No Change

Strand Increase by £1,000

CARRICKFERGUS PRESBYTERY

Ballyclare No Change

Ballynure No Change

Gardenmore No Change

Raloo and No Change

Magheramore No Change

COLERAINE AND LIMAVADY PRESBYTERY

Dungiven and No Change

Largy No Change

Hazelbank, Coleraine No Change

DERRY AND DONEGAL PRESBYTERY

Carlisle Road Londonderry and No Change

Crossroads No Change

First Derry and No Change

Monreagh No Change

Donegal and Increase by €2,500 per annum for next 2 years

Stranorlar No Change

DOWN PRESBYTERY

Ballygowan No Change

Second Comber No Change

Downpatrick and Increase by £1,000

Ardglass No Change

Killinchy No Change

Second Saintfield Increase by £1,000

DROMORE PRESBYTERY

First Lisburn	No Change
Magheragall	£29,250 (2018). Change to Appropriate Ministerial Minimum (2019)

DUBLIN AND MUNSTER PRESBYTERY

Corboy and Mullingar	No Change
Donabate	Increase by €2,000. Review again in 2019.
Dun Laoghaire	No Change
Galway	Increase by €2,000 per annum for next 2 years. Review again after 2 years.
Howth and Malahide	Increase by €2,000 per annum for next 2 years.
Maynooth	No Change

IVEAGH PRESBYTERY

Bannside	No Change
Glascar and Donoughmore	Increase by £1,000 No Change

MONAGHAN PRESBYTERY

Ballyalbany and Glennan	No Change No Change
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NEWRY PRESBYTERY

Warrenpoint and Rostrevor	No Change No Change
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OMAGH PRESBYTERY

Newtownstewart and Gortin	Increase by £1,000 No Change
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ROUTE PRESBYTERY

Ballyweaney	No Change
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TEMPLEPATRICK PRESBYTERY

High Street, Antrim	No Change
Hydepark and Lylehill	No Change No Change

TYRONE PRESBYTERY

Coagh and	No Change
Ballygoney and	No Change
Saltersland	No Change

Supply Fee

20. The level of Supply Fee is determined by the Code, Par 238, and for 2017 this is £105 (€155) and £70 (€105) where only a single service is supplied in one Congregation. Travelling expenses should be paid in accordance with the rate set for attendance at Assembly Councils, currently 15p (22cents) per mile.

CHURCH ARCHITECTURE AND MANSES PANEL

Mr Brian Knox reports:

21. In the past year the Panel has met eight times and considered applications in accordance with Par 57(6) of the Code. These ranged from construction of new churches, halls and manses, demolition works, structural alterations etc., to the removal of pews enabling wheelchair access, provision of new audio-visual systems, designs for memorials, windows, artificial lighting, seating/furnishings requisite for public worship. Proposals are authorised, successively, by congregation, presbytery and Linkage Commission. In practical terms therefore following congregational approval, proposals should be sent to presbytery which in turn, following its approval, transmits it to the Church Architecture and Manses Panel for consideration on behalf of the Linkage Commission. The Panel Convener will then present an appropriate recommendation for approval directly to the Commission. Over the last year many of the submissions were able to be dealt with by the Panel using the information provided, while others necessitated the request for more detailed explanation of the proposal. The Panel was able to assist on numerous occasions by making helpful comments/suggestions which were appreciated by the congregations involved.
22. Throughout the year representatives from the Panel have been involved in discussion with the Department for Communities (Historic Environment Division) officials regarding a decision taken by the Minister for Communities in September 2016 not to remove the ecclesiastical exemption from Listed Building Consent and to put in place partnering arrangements between the Department for Communities and larger church organisations. These discussions culminated in January 2018 and the Partnering Arrangements agreed between the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Department for Communities are shown in Appendix C. It is understood that the other larger church organisations will now engage individually to reach the same final position as PCI.

ADDITIONAL PASTORAL PERSONNEL AND AUXILIARY MINISTRY PANEL

The Rev Colin Gamble reports:

23. In the past year, the Linkage Commission approved the creation of 39 new Additional Pastoral Personnel (APP) posts and the extension or amendment of 13 existing posts. One new Congregational Auxiliary Ministry post was created.
24. Kirk sessions should contact the Convener of the APPAM Panel when considering the creation an APP post. Guidelines are available from the Convener which set out the necessary steps. The Convener is also able to advise kirk sessions on the best way to contact the HR support provider. The approval of the HR support provider, presbytery and the Linkage Commission is required before any new APP post can be advertised.
25. The approval of the HR support provider, presbytery and the Linkage Commission is also required to extend an existing post. Kirk sessions are advised to note carefully when an existing fixed-term contract concludes in order to give sufficient time to decide whether or not to extend the post.
26. New APP Salary Scales for 2018 were agreed by the Linkage Commission at its meeting in November 2017. These are available from the Convener of the APPAM Panel and are shown below. Kirk sessions are required to use the recommended salary scales when creating a new post.
27. Kirk sessions should also contact the Convener when considering the creation of a Congregational Auxiliary Ministry post. Proposals to create such posts should normally come to the Linkage Commission through the presbytery. Auxiliary ministers are commissioned to work, normally on a part-time basis, under the supervision of a full Minister of Word and Sacrament. The Auxiliary Ministry Scheme is intended to be flexible and therefore, while it is a Ministry of the Word, some pastoral duties may be associated with the post.
28. Guidelines for kirk sessions on general employment issues were issued in 2017. These provide guidance on: what support is available from the HR support provider; creating a post; supervision of an employee; conflict of interest; capability, disciplinary and grievance issues; and salaries and expenses. It is hoped these guidelines will be helpful to Kirk Sessions by summarising for them some of their responsibilities and the support they can expect from the HR support provider and, in exceptional cases, from the Head of Personnel. The guidelines are available from the Convener.
29. Kirk sessions are reminded that organists (or similar) who receive any form of remuneration should be issued with a statement of main terms and conditions and job description. Once the documents have been issued, presbytery should be notified. Before employing a new

organist (or similar), the kirk session should draw up a statement of main terms and conditions, job description, personnel specification and advertisement. The approval of presbytery is required before creating such a post. Templates are available from the Convener. The HR support provider should always be consulted.

30. Ministers are reminded to seek approval from presbytery and the Linkage Commission before undertaking paid public appointments ('Extra-Parochial Work'). This kind of work has been defined as "Remunerated work outside of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland undertaken by a parish minister that amounts to more than six hours in any week." A return form, available from the Convener of the APPAM Panel, should normally be returned before the appointment begins and then annually by 15 September.

APP RECOMMENDED SALARY SCALES 2018

	Sterling salary pt	Euro salary pt	Level of responsibility of post	Qualification attained by employee or level of experience
Band A	£18,319 £18,975 £19,638 £20,297 £21,135 £21,790	€27,968 €28,970 €29,981 €30,988 €32,268 €33,266	Mostly direct work with children, young people or adults under close regular supervision; low management responsibility for people or projects.	Obtained or working towards OCN level 2and3 qualifications, PCI Youth/Children's Ministry Course or similar qualification in the relevant field. Where this level of qualification is not held, demonstrated experience in this field of activity may be deemed equivalent.

	Sterling salary pt	Euro salary pt	Level of responsibility of post	Qualification attained by employee or level of experience
Band B	£22,849 £23,885 £24,956 £26,061 £26,816	€34,884 €36,466 €38,099 €39,786 €40,938	General responsibility for specific areas of programme and ministry oversight; graduating to less closely supervised responsibility for programmes, strategy, volunteers or leaders.	Appropriate recognition of attainment or working towards undergraduate or postgraduate theological study or professional qualifications (including Youth and Community, teaching qualification or other related professional qualifications such as counselling or social work). Where this level of qualification is not held, demonstrated experience in this field of activity may be deemed equivalent.

Please note:

- (a) This salary scale was initially based on the JNC Youth and Community work scale (2009) for the UK and has since been updated annually. For 2018, the NI salary scale has been increased in line with the increase in the NI ministerial minimum (2% for 2018). The ROI salary scale has been increased in line with the increase in the ROI ministerial minimum (1% for 2018).
- (b) The above rates are deemed to apply to a minimum of 37.5 hours per week. For employees working less than 37.5 hours per week a pro-rata rate is applicable.
- (c) The APPAM Panel Convener of the Linkage Commission should be contacted for the most up to date figures and for advice on their interpretation.

EFFECTIVE CONTEMPORARY MINISTRY TASK GROUP

The Rev Jim Stothers reports:

31. The Effective Contemporary Ministry Task Group was established by the Commission in January 2016, with membership also from the Council for Mission in Ireland and the Council for Training in Ministry, from which Council the initiative for the Task Group originated. The remit was “to bring recommendations as to how the thrust of the resolutions of the 2004 and 2005 General Assemblies concerning mission may be implemented.” (See GAR 2004 pages 67-68 and 2005 pages 156-157 and 162-163.)
32. The Task Group made recommendations in the autumn of 2016 as Action Points for each of the three represented bodies as follows:
 - (a) **Linkage Commission**
 - (i) Liaise with CMI concerning the establishment of appropriate missional posts, with an emphasis on urban mission and on the Republic of Ireland, and with a willingness to prioritise resources (both financial and personnel) to these situations.
 - (b) **Council for Mission in Ireland**
 - (i) Research, propose and develop appropriate missional posts, with an emphasis on urban mission and on the Republic of Ireland.
 - (ii) Liaise with the LC concerning the establishment of these posts.
 - (iii) Through consultation with CTM, factor into the consideration of missional posts opportunities that might be available to contribute to the training of students and licentiates for effective contemporary ministry.
 - (iv) Contribute financially to this training through the Mission Support Grant Scheme.
 - (c) **Council for Training in Ministry**
 - (i) Offer advice to CMI concerning missional posts that might contribute to the training of students and licentiates for effective contemporary ministry.
 - (ii) Assign students and licentiates to appropriate missional contexts.
 - (iii) Contribute financially through scholarships.
 - (iv) Develop courses of study and training which will equip students and licentiates for effective contemporary ministry in mission contexts.
 - (v) Consider whether funding for student and licentiate assistantships needs to be removed from CMF to a fund which would be the responsibility of CTM.

33. The Task Group in March 2018 reviewed these action points and concluded that in large measure they had been followed through. It is noted in particular that two students for the ministry have been placed in missional situations in which it is intended that the gifting and calling they already appear to have for urban and cross-cultural mission can be further developed. Funding to enable this to happen has been released through College Scholarships, Central Ministry Fund, and Council for Mission in Ireland grants.
34. The Task Group has made some further recommendations as follows:
 - (a) That a vision for recruitment in terms of a contemporary style of ministry be developed by the **Council for Training in Ministry**: this would include proactively publicising examples of good missional situations.
 - (b) That the **Linkage Commission** encourage presbyteries to put support structures in place for those called to challenging situations, such as struggling urban congregations or small rural congregations which lack personnel resources and which need revitalisation.
 - (c) That licentiates be encouraged to consider calls to charges which are in need of revitalisation (as distinct from Church Plants): this could include the **Council for Mission in Ireland** hosting an event to inform and enthuse licentiates in this regard.
35. It was from the beginning intended that, as a Task Group, it would have a time-limited existence and so, having in some measure fulfilled its remit by bringing the two sets of recommendations noted above, it has been thanked for its services and discharged.

Mr James Livingstone writes:

36. Having completed his five year term as Convener of the Linkage Commission (previously Union Commission), Rev William Henry retires at this Assembly. Mr Henry was previously Secretary of the then Union Commission and has served as a member for some fifteen years in total.
37. During that period he has demonstrated not only industry in all that he has done but much graciousness in the manner in which he has sought to deal with vacancies throughout the denomination. His wise counsel and determination to do what is best for the work of Christ's kingdom will be greatly missed.

WILLIAM HENRY, Convener

APPENDIX A

Note:

- The bulk of the wording below is as was presented to GA 2016.
- Additional wording as requested following GA2016 and presented to GA 2017 is highlighted as text in CAPITALS.
- New wording presented to GA 2018 is highlighted by being underlined.

Guidelines for Interview by Kirk Session and Hearing Committee.

There are two points at which an interview may take place. The first is that at which the Kirk Session is in the process of drawing up a list for hearing (Code Par 194(6)). The second is that at which a Hearing Committee has heard a candidate (Code Par 194(4)). It is important to distinguish between these interviews and the fact that a Hearing Committee must not ask questions about matters which are the particular responsibility of the Kirk Session under Code Pars 35ff.

1. General

- (a) No meeting shall be held before a minister is eligible for call.
- (b) The minister's spouse shall not be present.
- (c) There shall be no bargaining, and no promises shall be sought or given.
- (d) The same basic questions for each candidate shall be agreed at a meeting convened by the Vacancy Convener or another ministerial member of the Vacancy Commission. **ATTENTION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE IMPORTANCE OF WEIGHTING OF QUESTIONS AND WISE USE MADE OF THE INTERVIEW TIME TO ENSURE THAT THE ESTABLISHED PRIORITIES OF THE KIRK SESSION AND CONGREGATION ARE EXPLORED THROUGH THE QUESTIONING.**
- (e) If possible, the questions should be notified to the candidates beforehand. Supplementary points may be discussed at the meeting.
- (f) No questions may be asked which invite comment on current settled policy of General Assembly.
- (g) No questions may be asked about the likely role of the minister's spouse or family in the life of the congregation or local community.

2. Interview by Kirk Session

- (a) While it is common practice for Kirk Sessions to interview possible candidates before drawing up a list, they are not obliged to do so.
- (b) If a Kirk Session wishes to interview, then it should take care to observe all the guidelines at *1. General* above, as well as those that follow under this section.

- (c) In interviewing candidates Kirk Sessions must bear in mind that, while the right to select candidates for a hearing belongs to them (Code Par 194(3)), it is the prerogative of the congregation to choose the minister (Code Par 195). The way the interviews are structured, and how the list is drawn up following the interviews, must be in such manner that the right to choose is not taken away from the congregation.
- (d) The Convener of the Vacancy Commission, or another ministerial member of the Vacancy Commission, shall act as Chairman.
- (e) ALL MATTERS CONCERNING THE LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION ARE UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE KIRK SESSION UNDER CODE PARS 35FF; RECOGNISING THE GENERAL ADVICE IN 1(D) ABOVE, IT MAY BE APPROPRIATE FOR KIRK SESSIONS TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT SOME SPECIFIC MATTERS WHERE CLARITY MAY BE IMPORTANT. THESE MAY INCLUDE QUESTIONS ON: SACRAMENTAL DISCIPLINE; THE DELIVERY OF PASTORAL CARE; HOW THE MINISTER MIGHT SUSTAIN AND NURTURE THEIR OWN SPIRITUAL LIFE; TIMES OF SERVICES OR NUMBER OF SERVICES ON A SUNDAY; THE MERITS OR DEMERITS OF A PARTICULAR TYPE OF ORGANISATION OR GROUP THAT THE KIRK SESSION WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR, BB, GB, BOWLING CLUB, CHOIR, PRAISE GROUP, HOUSE GROUPS; ATTITUDE TOWARDS SERVICES IN CONNECTION WITH THE LOYAL ORDERS OR THE MASONIC ORDER, INCLUDING WHAT MAY BE CARRIED/WORN INTO CHURCH; INTER-CHURCH WORSHIP AND RELATIONSHIPS.
- (f) It may be appropriate to ask questions concerning other matters not specified above but which may be important locally. These include: preaching patterns – e.g. topic, text, expository, lectionary; style of worship – e.g. use of liturgy, congregational participation; music – issues around use of organ and/or other instruments, contemporary songs, traditional hymns and psalms; marriage – personal criteria used by the candidate in deciding who to join in marriage.
- (g) While many of the issues relevant to church life may be later explored by the Hearing Committee, the Session should be satisfied that they have sufficiently reflected upon these areas with potential candidates to proceed with confidence to hearing (and if necessary interview with Hearing Committee).
- (h) Candidates should be given opportunity to indicate their position on matters important to them, which may not have been raised by Kirk Session.
- (i) Once a list has been drawn up no further interview by Kirk Session may take place in the process, unless it is necessary to make out a new or supplementary list.

3. Interview by Hearing Committee

- (a) Interviews by a Hearing Committee are not obligatory, nor are they necessary to fulfil the remit of a Hearing Committee, which is appointed in some circumstances to carry out more conveniently the role of the congregation in hearing candidates.
- (b) If a Hearing Committee wishes to interview, then it should take care to observe all the guidelines at 1. General above, as well as those that follow under this section.
- (c) An interview by a Hearing Committee may only take place on the same day that it has 'heard' a candidate preach – it must not be part of the process of drawing up a list.
- (d) The purpose of a Hearing Committee interview must be understood. A Hearing Committee must not trespass in areas that are the responsibility of Kirk Session, including those undertaken in drawing up a list for hearing. A Hearing Committee may be appointed i) to hear candidates and report back to the congregation, or ii) to recommend a sole nominee to be heard directly by the congregation before a call is decided on (Code Par 194(4)). In both cases the Hearing Committee will either report that it is unable to bring in a recommendation, or it will bring forward a name. If a candidate is being recommended, the Hearing Committee will report only their name and the details available in the General Assembly Directory (updated if necessary) or the equivalent information if not already a minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
- (e) The Convener of the Vacancy Commission, or another ministerial member of the Vacancy Commission shall act as Chairman.
- (f) ALL MATTERS CONCERNING THE LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION ARE UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE KIRK SESSION; BUT IT MAY BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE HEARING COMMITTEE TO ASK QUESTIONS WHICH ARE OF GENERAL CONCERN TO THE CONGREGATION. It would be beneficial to enquire about the candidates approach to ministry and the priorities they would espouse e.g. what is the value and merit of every member ministry and how the candidate would demonstrate this in practice. HOWEVER, THE HEARING COMMITTEE SHOULD NOT ASK QUESTIONS WHICH ARE SPECIFIC TO KIRK SESSION: MATTERS OF SACRAMENTAL DISCIPLINE OR ATTITUDES TO SPECIAL CHURCH SERVICES. FOR EXAMPLE WHILE IT MAY BE APPROPRIATE FOR A HEARING COMMITTEE TO ENQUIRE ABOUT COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE TO QUESTION ABOUT FORMAL INVOLVEMENT IN INTER-CHURCH SERVICES WHICH IS A KIRK SESSION (AND MINISTER'S) PREROGATIVE.

- (g) While the Minister is responsible to Presbytery for the conduct of public worship, it may be appropriate to ask questions concerning matters connected with public worship. This includes preaching patterns, style of worship, music, and things relating to the service that has just been 'heard'.
- (h) While the delivery of pastoral care is the responsibility of Kirk Session, it may be appropriate to ask candidates about their own personal approach – for example how they prioritise, the use of prayer and Scripture in visiting, the conduct of funerals.

APPENDIX B

Protracted Illness guidelines

1. As a result of protracted medically certified absence, a Minister or Associate Minister (hereafter referred to as 'Ministers') shall be paid as follows:
 - Months 0-6 - 100% of salary paid
 - Months 7-9 - 75% of salary paid
 - Months 10-12 - 50% of salary paid
 - Months 12 onwards – all payments cease

Notes: The Minister shall be informed prior to each of these changes being enacted, through an appropriate letter from the Clerk's office being included with the previous month's payroll.

No payments under the scheme shall be made to any Minister for more than 12 months in any 24 month period and the above reductions shall also apply in a similar rolling '12 month in 24 month' manner.
2. Medical evidence must be supplied to the Financial Secretary in all cases of illness of more than seven days duration. Failure to submit such evidence could mean loss of benefit.
3. While on full salary any invalidity or other state benefit reclaimed by a Minister should be paid over to the Financial Secretary to be forwarded to the Congregation to be applied towards meeting expenses of the period of illness. (When a Minister serves in a linked charge normally one Treasurer will be identified to whom payment is to be made.)
4. Application may be made for a grant to meet the cost of pulpit supplies in accordance with the rules for the time being of the Sick Supply Fund.
5. Presbytery shall make arrangements for a reduction in ministerial expenses during the period of illness (in accordance with the Linkage Commission Guidelines for the time being) to assist with pulpit supplies or other additional expenditure occasioned by a Minister's incapacity.

6. Normally, after 6 months of medically certified absence (and at any other point deemed necessary) a Minister will be required to attend an independent occupational health consultation. (This consultation would also clarify whether a further independent 'return to work' consultation was necessary.)
7. Each case of protracted illness shall be reviewed so that a decision can be made at the end of twelve months absence from duties provided that (a) absence has been continuous, or (b) absence or absences have been of significant duration or recurring over the twelve-month period, as interpreted by the Linkage Commission, after consultation with Presbytery.
8. The Commission, in consultation with Presbytery and the Finance Panel, shall have the authority to advise Presbytery to loose from his/her charge any Minister on the grounds of medical incapacity, after consultation with the Kirk Session and Congregational Committee.
9. Specifically, with regard to Licentiates and Ordained Assistants, during medically certified absence:
 - (a) Licentiates and Ordained Assistants shall be paid as outlined in section (A) above. Sections (B) and (C) shall also apply.
 - (b) The costs shall be met as follows:
 - (i) 1-3 months: no change in the arrangements in place.
 - (ii) 4-12 months: appropriate salary and employer's national insurance contributions, along with full housing allowance to be paid by C.M.F. Expenses, paid by C.M.F., may be reduced by the Linkage Commission.

The provisions of section (F) above shall apply.

Each case of protracted illness shall be reviewed in consultation with the Council for Training in Ministry, so that a decision can be made at the end of twelve months absence from duties, or at the date of eligibility for call, provided that (a) absence has been continuous, or (b) absence or absences have been of significant duration or recurring over the twelve-month period, as interpreted by the Linkage Commission, after consultation with the Council for Training in Ministry.

The Commission shall have authority to recommend to the Council for Training in Ministry and the Congregation concerned the termination of a Licentiate or Ordained Assistantship on the grounds of medical incapacity.

Appendix

Minister's Holiday entitlement during periods of illness shall be reduced as follows:

After 6 months of illness – 2 weeks reduction (including 2 Sundays)

After 9 months of illness – 3 weeks reduction (including 3 Sundays)

Between 10 and 11 months of illness – 4 weeks reduction (including 4 Sundays)

Adopted by the Union Commission on Tuesday, 28th October 2014

Revised by the Linkage Commission on Tuesday, 27th February 2018

APPENDIX C

ECCLESIASTICAL EXEMPTION – PARTNERING ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND AND THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES

1. On 29th September 2016, the Minister for Communities advised the Northern Ireland Assembly of his decision not to remove the ecclesiastical exemption from Listed Building Consent, and of his intention instead to put in place partnering arrangements between his Department and large church organisations.
2. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) and the Department for Communities recognize the potential benefits of greater engagement between our organizations. The following partnering arrangements are designed to enhance communication and to continue to facilitate appropriate internal Church controls.

Enhancing Communication

- (a) The PCI will take part in an annual meeting agreed to between the Department for Communities, the PCI and other invited denominations.
- (b) The PCI and the Department of Communities will each provide a key central contact person, through which significant matters can be raised as necessary throughout the year.

Facilitating Appropriate Internal Church Controls

The PCI agrees:

- (a) To maintain a Church Architecture and Manses Panel (or successor) containing suitably qualified personnel (augmenting the Panel as required);

- (b) That the decisions of the Panel will reflect the Church's responsibility for ministry and mission, while taking account of the special architectural and historic aspects of listed buildings;
- (c) To facilitate appropriate engagement between the Panel and Department for Communities officials; and
- (d) To share relevant information with congregations, including best practice advice on the management and development of historic church buildings, provisions of planning legislation, and the rigorous process within the PCI for gaining approval for all works (attached as Appendix 1).

The Department for Communities agrees:

- (a) To engage constructively with PCI and its Panel to seek to determine a way forward on development proposals which respects both architectural and ministry and mission considerations;
 - (b) To write to the PCI Panel regarding any proposals to list a Presbyterian church, to give the Panel the opportunity to provide input on behalf of the PCI (alongside continuing to write to the individual PCI congregation as the custodian/ owner of the building being considered).
3. The PCI and the Department believe that this approach is fully in accordance with the Minister's decision, and will ensure that church buildings are fit for purpose to meet the changing needs of congregations in their ministry and mission, and the local communities they serve, while giving appropriate consideration to the public value in maintaining the special architectural and historic interest of listed buildings.
 4. The key contact points for the effective operation of these arrangements will be the chair of the PCI Panel and the Assistant Director of Heritage Advice and Regulation Branch. These arrangements will be effective from 1 February 2018 and their operation will be reviewed after 12 months.

APPENDIX 1

PERMISSIONS FOR WORKS IN CONNECTION WITH CONGREGATIONAL PROPERTY

1. The process of making alterations to a church building proceeds as follows:
 - (a) If there is a proposal for a congregation to carry out work in connection with property which falls within the scope of Code Par 57 (6), permission at a congregational meeting must first be obtained.

- (b) The advice of the Church Architecture and Manses Panel may be sought early on, even before congregational approval is obtained.
- (c) Full planning permission should not be sought until final sign-off by the Linkage Commission.
- (d) The proposal is submitted to Presbytery which decides whether to approve the proposal on missional, financial and other related grounds, unless the congregation receives augmentation, in which case it consults the Linkage Commission and obtains its consent before authorising the project.
- (e) If the project is approved, Presbytery transmits it to the Church Architecture and Manses Panel. It may, but it is not required to, include comment on the details.
- (f) The Panel examines the proposal, taking into account any Presbytery comments. If necessary, it works with the congregation to finalise the project.
- (g) The Congregation resubmit the finalized project to Presbytery.
- (h) Presbytery approves and signs off on the finalised project and sends the revised plans to the Panel Convener for final submission to the Linkage Commission.
- (i) The Commission gives final sign-off.

**ASSESSMENTS ON FULLY CONSTITUTED
CHURCH EXTENSION CHARGES – 2018**

Under Par. 234 (3) (A) of the Code

<i>Church</i>	<i>Fully Constituted</i>	<i>Families (†)</i>	<i>Assess 2018 £</i>	<i>Assess Income £</i>	<i>Income*</i> £
New Mossley	2005	110 (72)	108	41,992	103,526
Ballysally	2007	150 (89)	133	58,008	174,511

† Families contributing at least £5.00 per annum

*As from 2012 Income includes all Organisational Income

ASSESSMENTS ON CHURCH EXTENSION CHARGES – 2018

<i>Church</i>	<i>Building</i>	<i>Assessable</i>	<i>Stipend</i>	<i>CMF</i>	<i>Cb. Ext.</i>	<i>HM</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>£</i>	<i>Income £</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
Taughmonagh	-	10,823*	3,247	1,623	1,082	649	6,601

*2016 Assessable income as 2017 figure not yet available

LICENTIATES

FIRST YEAR – From 1st January, 2018

LICENTIATES ARE PAID 75% of the ministerial minimum = £18,731 plus House Allowance p.a. (single - £702; married - £1,002) if applicable House Allowance is shared equally between the Congregation and C.M.F.

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Lic.</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i> £	<i>Cong. Cont.</i> £	<i>CMF</i> £
Sloan Street	* R Aicken	18.06.17	31,499 (30%)	9,951	9,782
Hillhall	* A Alves-Areias	04.06.17	38,739 (30%)	12,123	7,610
Edengrove	* J Brogan	28.05.17	33,067 (30%)	10,421	9,312
Windsor	* D Curran	16.06.17	33,590 (S/A)	3,000	16,733
Whiteabbey	* A Downey	04.06.17	40,008 (30%)	12,503	7,230
Kilbride	* S Kennedy	28.05.17	37,773 (30%)	11,833	7,900
Legacurry	* M McCormick	04.06.17	37,849 (30%)	11,856	7,877
New Row	* J McKane	21.05.17	37,271 (30%)	11,682	8,051
Railway Street	* J Maguire	11.06.17	37,773 (25%)	9,944	9,789
Newmills	+ P Poots	16.06.17	31,653 (30%)	9,847	9,586
Richhill	* J Torrens	28.05.17	41,368 (30%)	12,911	6,822
Greenwell Street	* R Tregaskis	25.06.17	38,850 (30%)	12,156	7,577
Ballyholme	* S Wright	11.06.17	35,849 (30%)	11,256	8,477
Stormont (from 5.2.18)	* A Gilicze	05.02.18	45,065 (30%)	14,021	4,464

* Married House Allowance

+ Single House Allowance

No House Allowance - House provided by congregation

s/a Special Arrangement

LICENTIATES

SECOND YEAR – From 1st January, 2018

LICENTIATES ARE PAID 75% of the ministerial minimum = £19,980 plus House Allowance p.a. (single - £702; married - £1,002) if applicable House Allowance is shared equally between the Congregation and C.M.F.

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Lic.</i> £	<i>Ministers Stipend</i> £	<i>Cong. Cont.</i> £	<i>C.m.f.</i>
Wellington	* J Boyd	19.06.16	42,693 (32%)	14,163	6,819
First Ballymena	* M Boyd	29.05.16	39,864 (32%)	13,257	7,725
Maze	* E Frazer	19.06.16	32,950 (32%)	11,045	9,937
Abbot's Cross	* S Hawthorne	29.05.16	33,017 (32%)	11,066	9,916
The Mall	* C Jackson	05.06.16	38,066 (29.5%)	11,730	9,252
McQuiston Memorial	* A Marsh	05.06.16	35,862 (32%)	11,977	9,005
Immanuel	† J Martin	27.05.16	33,590 (32%)	11,100	9,582
Cooke Centenary	* J Newell	19.06.16	31,499 (32%)	10,581	10,401
Fisherwick	* J O'Donnell	18.06.16	39,864 (32%)	13,257	7,725
Whitehouse	* R Orr	05.06.16	32,640 (27%)	9,314	11,668
Hamilton Road	* R Patton	29.05.16	46,870 (32%)	15,499	5,483
Alexandra	* J Porter	27.05.16	25,659 (27%)	7,429	13,553
Harryville	* M Rutledge	05.06.16	37,994 (32%)	12,595	8,387
Ballyclare	* J Smith	26.06.16	37,982 (32%)	12,655	8,327
Elmwood	* G Andrich	07.12.00	37,249 (32%)	12,421	8,561

* Married House Allowance

† Single House Allowance

No House Allowance - House provided by congregation

s/a Special Arrangement

LICENTIATES

THIRD YEAR – From 1st January, 2018

LICENTIATES ARE PAID 85% of the ministerial minimum = £21,229 plus House Allowance p.a. (single - £702; married - £1,002) if applicable House Allowance is shared equally between the Congregation and C.M.F.

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date Of Lic.</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i> £	<i>Cong. Cont.</i> £	<i>CMF</i> £
Killead	* A Burke	21.07.15	18,845 (S/A)	3,265	7,850
Loanends	* A Burke	21.07.15	18,845 (S/A)	3,265	7,851
Kilfennan (to 12.1.18)	† D Clarke	07.06.15	36,201 (32%)	392	329
Kirkpatrick Memorial	* R Cronin	21.06.15	46,876 (32%)	15,501	6,730
Knock (to 3.1.18)	* A Dickey	31.05.15	52,500 (32%)	142	41
First Carrickfergus	† A Gill	07.06.15	43,993 (32%)	14,429	7,502
Bangor, Hamilton Road	* M Gray	05.06.15	46,870 (32%)	15,499	6,732
Carryduff	* B Kee	12.06.15	36,727 (32%)	12,254	9,977
First Larne	* D Kelly	07.06.15	40,371 (32%)	13,420	8,811
Hill St, Lurgan (to 1.2.18)	* S Kennedy	26.06.15	41,171 (32%)	1,177	736
Derramore	† R McClure	14.06.15	13,643 (32%)	4,485	6,367
Drumachose	† R McClure	14.06.15	26,718 (32%)	8,782	2,297
Templepatrick	* A McCracken	07.06.15	41,502 (32%)	13,782	8,449
Second Comber	* A McQuade	21.06.15	45,197 (32%)	14,964	7,267
Dungannon (to 4.1.18)	* G Mullan	14.06.15	39,470 (32%)	144	100
Stormont	* B Van der Linde	28.06.15	45,065 (32%)	1,104	541

* Married House Allowance
 † Single House Allowance
 s/a Special Arrangement
 # No House Allowance

ORDAINED ASSISTANTS

From 1 January, 2017

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Ord</i>	<i>Minister's Stipend</i> £	<i>% Min</i>	<i>Salary</i> £	<i>House Allow</i> £	<i>Total</i> £	<i>Cong Contrib</i> £	<i>CMF</i> £
Bloomfield	* D Burke	08.05.16	39,538	100	25,659	1,002	26,661	2,000	24,661

* Married House Allowance

† Single House Allowance

s/a Special Arrangement

No House Allowance - House provided by Congregation

ASSOCIATE MINISTERS – 2017

<i>Name</i>	<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Salary Paid</i> £	<i>Recovery</i> £	<i>House Allow. Paid</i> £	<i>Employer Pension NIC Costs</i> £
A Mullan	Mourne	27,839.42	27,839.42	n/a	9,411.00
G McCracken	Ballywillan	26,430.00	26,430.00	2,000.00	8,878.00
D McGaughy	Cuningham Memorial	29,514.00	29,514.00	n/a	10,044.00
D Stanfield	First Bangor	30,799.00	30,799.00	n/a	10,530.00
G Ball	Orangefield	25,916.00	25,916.00	1,000.00	8,684.00
A Galbraith	West Church Bangor	26,173.00	26,173.00	1,000.00	8,782.00
D Currie	Knock	25,787.00	25,787.00	2,000.00	8,635.00

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Parish Bounds for the (amalgamated) congregation of Greyabbey be as described in Par 18 of the Linkage Commission report.
2. That Guidelines for Interviews at Vacancies (Appendix A) be adopted.
3. That the updated guidelines for the Prolonged Disability Scheme (Appendix B) be noted.
4. That the congregation of Fortwilliam and Macrory be amalgamated with the congregation of Whitehouse no later than 31st December 2018, on terms set by the Linkage Commission.
5. That the congregation of Boyle be amalgamated with the congregation of Sligo no later than 31st December 2018, on terms set by the Linkage Commission.
6. That the report of the Linkage Commission be received.

COUNCIL FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS

Convener: Rev COLIN MORRISON

Secretary: Rev DAVID THOMPSON

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Council for Congregational Life and Witness has met on two occasions since last year's General Assembly.
2. The report details:
 - (a) The work of the following eight committees:
 - (i) Discipleship Committee
 - (ii) Global Mission Involvement Committee
 - (iii) Leadership Committee (including the Youth Assembly and SPUD at the General Assembly)
 - (iv) Outreach Committee
 - (v) Pastoral Care Committee
 - (vi) Women's Strategy and Coordination Committee (including Presbyterian Women)
 - (vii) Worship Committee
 - (viii) Youth, Children's and Family Strategy and Coordination Committee.
 - (b) The work of the Developing Congregational Use of Social Media Task Group.
 - (c) A summary of the background to a proposal for streamlining the Council's structure of Committees, Panels, Task Groups and Organising Groups. This will be formally presented to the Assembly under the report of the General Council.
 - (d) Developing the Council's Fruitful Congregations theme, particularly through the Growing in Fruitfulness and Small and Fruitful initiatives.
 - (e) Developing Council engagement with Presbytery as a training hub.
 - (f) Plans to develop the enabling element of the Council's ministry.
 - (g) Continuing challenges in the area of communicating with congregations.

3. An appendix sets out an overview of the main activities, training and events offered by the Council during 2017/18.

Difficult Task. Active Hope

4. Sometimes how others see us can come as a revelation giving insight into what we are really like and what God is doing in our life. A visiting guest speaker at one of the main programmes delivered by the Council for Congregational Life and Witness in 2018 engaged in many conversations with ministers and elders from all over the island in the course of his time with us. Asked to sum up his impressions of his experience of the present situation for ministry and mission in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, he did so in just four words. Difficult task. Active hope.
5. If the life and witness of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is to be fruitful in the times in which God has placed us, it is necessary for us to take hold of both realities. We do face a difficult task. To pretend otherwise is to ignore the impact of the rapidly changing, increasingly secular society in which we live and labour for the gospel. But do we also have eyes for what God is doing among us in and through the life and witness of local congregations? Ours is an active hope. Not just a future heavenly hope, but a hope that is being experienced in the here and now of what God is doing by His Spirit.
6. Active hope is not a passive waiting upon God. It leans into the promises of His word with prayerful expectancy and Kingdom anticipation. It does not expect things to come easily. It commits itself to patient sowing, planting, watering and reaping. It embraces necessary change. It engages a needy world. It enlists in the struggle against principalities and powers. Let us take encouragement that a visitor sees signs of that activity and hope in our life as congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
7. The Council for Congregational Life and Witness exists to accompany local congregations in developing their calling to live out their life as communities of the people of God. It listens and responds to the needs of churches to encourage, envision, equip and enable them for this task. The report that follows offers some snapshots of the main initiatives undertaken during 2017/18 and highlights some emerging priorities.

Accompanying the Development of Congregational Life and Witness

8. The Council's work of accompanying congregations in developing their life and witness is wide and varied and presently overseen by eight committees. The following section offers an overview of what is presently being delivered, is planned and is being prioritised. Some of it represents work that is progressing, some is work in progress.
9. The Council invites and welcomes the comments of the General Assembly on all of it – what is being delivered, what is under discussion

and what it isn't, but needs to be. It is committed to ongoing refinement, nuancing and fresh prioritisation in response to the collectively expressed needs of congregations.

DISCIPLESHIP COMMITTEE

10. Supporting 'local congregations in enabling their members to live as followers of Jesus in every relationship, everywhere they are and in every circumstance of life' has been identified as a denominational priority (Priorities Committee Report to the General Assembly 2017). The Discipleship Committee continues to develop its work with an ever-sharpening focus on addressing this task.
11. The Everyday Disciples theme of last summer's Special Assembly helped delegates further to explore some key areas of the discipleship agenda. The challenge, as always with this kind of event, is how to translate successfully the experience, enthusiasm and learning of those who attended to the greater number of their congregation who were not there.
12. The autumn meeting of the Committee spent time reflecting on the development of the discipleship conversation within the denomination in recent years and sought to identify and prioritise a set of next steps.
13. The Essentials DVD Bible study resource, launched last September, provided congregations with a way of stimulating the discipleship conversation in the context of small groups. It has proved popular with many.
14. Tides also continues to offer a popular devotional approach through which members are challenged and encouraged in their personal journey of following Jesus.
15. Envisioning and equipping in the area of congregational discipleship development continues to be offered through Disciple Makers' Network. This year saw a good response from congregations to the two programmes offered in Ballymoney and Ballydown.
16. Following on from these initiatives, the Discipleship Development Officer has been following up on requests from individual congregations to accompany them on the fledgling steps of designing a pathway towards a discipling ministry which fits their particular starting point and set of ministry circumstances. Approaching developing congregational discipleship in this way is profitable. It recognises that one size does not fit all and resists the temptation to import and impose any particular process designed by others in a different ministry setting.
17. The emerging priority for congregations appears to be a set of simple tools to enable discipleship conversations in the more personal setting of twos and threes, rather than in traditional small group Bible studies. While both have their place, the more intimate environment of relational discipleship offers the opportunity to go deeper and reflect

on particular individual discipleship challenges. A focus group to further nuance what congregations wanted to see developed for use in this area has helped design a format and a series of themes that will be worked up and released in the next number of years. It is hoped that the first of these will be ready in September. Entitled Seasons, it has a focus on following Jesus through a variety of circumstances of life such as storms, disappointment, change, suffering and success. Coinciding with its release, it is also intended to deliver an introduction to the resource and training in using it. This will be rolled out on a regional basis.

18. Discipleship is something of an all-embracing theme. It also has many particular facets. The challenge is to hold the development of what might be considered core elements in balance with highlighting specific outworkings of what it means to follow Jesus in different settings and stages of life.
19. It has been encouraging to see how the work of the Good Relations Panel has raised the profile of the particular challenge of what it means to be the church in the setting of a still divided society. Central to this has been the promotion and development of the Vision for Society statement for congregational use. The Committee encourages congregations to use the DVD Bible study resource, Living Out a Version of the Vision, to keep before members the need to reflect deeply on what it means to love a wide variety of neighbours, many of whom are not like us. The Good Relations Panel is beginning to unpack a further practical outworking of that challenge by exploring what it means for our congregations to be communities of welcome.
20. Christian giving and generosity remain important elements of discipleship. Grace of Giving resources remain available for use in congregations. It has been agreed to bring together a focus group to examine how to keep the Christian use of money and the importance of giving to God's work before congregations and their members.
21. The Committee has also considered the area of discipleship and the family. It has reflected on how the Close to Home materials have been used in congregations and their particular needs in developing this area. The Children's and Youth Development Officers have been encouraged to continue to use all existing channels, and to develop new ways, to support and resource parents, leaders and congregations as a whole for family ministry.
22. A day conference in April, entitled Worship in the Discipleshaping Church, helped those who plan, shape and lead worship to do so with an eye to how our vertical focus on God in worship also enables worshippers to make horizontal connections with the realities of living for His glory in their everyday lives.
23. This year, the Transform young adults' discipleship event examined the area of freedom in Christ with a particular focus on missional discipleship in the city.

24. Youth Night 2018 will follow a discipleship theme. The aim is to ensure that what has become a big denominational focus is also conveyed to young people in a setting and style with which they can readily connect. It will reinforce the priority of hearing and responding to Jesus' call to follow Him in a world of many competing claims for attention and allegiance.
25. Further areas remain to be explored. Those already flagged for attention on the Committee's agenda include resourcing congregations for children's and youth discipleship and discipling men and women in congregational life.

MARK GOUDY, Convener

GLOBAL MISSION INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

26. Last year's report to the General Assembly highlighted how the Global Mission Involvement Committee had identified an urgent need to find fresh ways to raise the profile of involvement in global mission in congregations. This year's work has begun to tease out that priority by way of a survey of congregations and the development of a framework strategy for the future.
27. The survey contacted 157 ministers and asked a range of questions about congregational global mission involvement. These included exploring who took responsibility in their congregation for developing this area of its life; which PCI global mission projects they used; if they sent a team overseas; if they had members engaging in mission work overseas; and if their congregations had an active, ongoing link with a particular person, place or project in overseas mission.
28. On the basis of the survey results, the Committee identified two priorities crucial to increasing congregational engagement in global mission involvement. Firstly, there is a need to envision, equip and enable congregations to create, or develop, a deep link with at least one particular person, place or project in global mission. This foundation offers the opportunity on which to build the familiarity, interest, ownership and engagement of members through participation in a living, ongoing, global mission relationship. Secondly, there is an opportunity to harness the potential of existing annual PCI initiatives in global mission in a fresh way. With greater connectedness and coordination, it should be possible to more intentionally present them as a range of opportunities spread out across the church year to help members grasp the scope of what is involved in God's global mission and being a global disciple. This dual framework strategy for developing congregational global mission involvement has been captured as set out below.

29. **Go Deep. Go Wide.** – Developing a dual focus for congregational global mission involvement:

To encourage, envision, equip and enable every congregation to develop a dual focus for global mission involvement which

- (a) **goes deep** by identifying and developing a particular focus on a specific global mission person, place or project with which to be involved in an ongoing way appropriate to their situation.
 - (b) **goes wide** by harnessing the annual denominational opportunities, coordinated with the collective sub-branding ‘Global Disciples’, as a variety of ways of being involved in the breadth of what God is doing around the world. This to include:
 - (i) Global Disciples Care for God’s World
 - Annual opportunity of World Development Appeal.
 - (ii) Global Disciples Share in God’s Mission
 - Global mission element of United Appeal.
 - Annual Youth and Children’s Project rebranded as an All Age Congregational Global Mission resource centred on provision for an all age worship service, but drawing in opportunities for all children, youth and family elements of congregational life and witness e.g. organisations including Sunday School, BB/GB, Youth Fellowship, Toddlers Group.
 - PW Annual Overseas Project.
 - (iii) Global Disciples Respond with God’s Love
 - Moderator’s Appeal in situations of special need.
 - (iv) Global Disciples Go in God’s Name
 - Denominational Overseas Teams as commissioned by Council for Global Mission but delivered in conjunction with Global Mission Involvement Committee.
30. The Committee has opened an already fruitful discussion with the Council for Global Mission. It has offered its encouragement in continuing to develop the details of the framework strategy and committed to actively engage with the Global Mission Involvement Committee in the process of doing so in a coordinated way. Further conversations will be required with the United Appeal Committee and Presbyterian Women to ascertain their views on the ‘Go Wide’ component of the strategy and to seek their support for an agreed way forward.
31. The area of providing effective and accessible guidance and support for congregations sending teams overseas is also a priority. The Committee recognises that, increasingly, most congregations sending teams overseas only have the opportunity to gather their team members together two or three times in advance of departure. The challenge is to help them maximise these opportunities.

32. The Do it Well toolkit remains a comprehensive guide to addressing best practice in sending effective short term mission teams and is recommended to congregations. However, the Committee is convinced that a shorter, sharper, simpler resource to lead teams through three stages – before they go, during their time away and after they come home – is required. This would also replace the Prepared to Go event which has been discontinued due to persistently poor numbers. The Committee will explore possibilities and aim to complete a new resource by summer 2019.
33. The Youth and Children's Project remains one of the most popular vehicles used by congregations in highlighting and promoting the area of global mission involvement. The 2018/19 project, entitled Foundations, will contribute to the funding of training courses in Pakistan for leaders in children's and youth ministries. Part of the finance raised will directly support aspects of the work of Maqsood and Ruby Kamil, long term partners with PCI in global mission. The subsidiary home mission element of the project will support the development of youth and children's ministry in Kilmount congregation in the Monaghan Presbytery.
34. The Concorde Fund is available to PCI members to provide financial assistance for travel related to involvement in overseas mission. Some changes have been made to application deadlines with the aim of increasing accessibility to this funding opportunity throughout the calendar year. The effectiveness of the new system will be kept under review.

TREVOR LONG, Convener

LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

35. 'Developing effective leadership according to biblical patterns and expectations, in every sphere of the General Assembly and its Councils', has been identified as a denominational priority (Priorities Committee Report to the General Assembly 2017). The Leadership Committee has a particular focus on supporting and resourcing congregations for this area of their life together. This involves work in the areas of developing emerging leaders, the eldership and in envisioning for the crucial task of leading congregations in leaning into the future.
36. The Committee has a strong sense of the need to explore congregational leadership in its widest context. Leadership cannot function without participation of members. Maintaining and expanding the connection and communication between leaders and followers is key. Nor is leadership the exclusive preserve of those who are called to formal offices of leadership. The necessity of harnessing the softer leadership skills of facilitating discussion and exercising wise relational influence as means of developing God's work are also evident. Making sense of all of this and how it relates to presbyterian polity is challenging.

37. A number of observations are emerging. If leadership is to garner ownership for any initiative it will have to become more collaborative in nature, finding viable ways of engaging the whole congregation in conversation about the future. This will require the development of enablers with facilitation skills. The lack of trust and training in a facilitative approach to leadership seems to represent a major leadership deficit in the ability to help congregations navigate necessary change.
38. It is also evident that congregations and their leaders are weary and wary of big initiatives and promises of easy, overnight, transformation. Rather, they have an increasing desire to be envisioned and equipped for low key, one-degree shifts, that offer deep and lasting change if pursued with wisdom, patience and grace. This represents a more realistic approach. The challenge of course is that some congregational situations require more rapid change than that for which this more gradual approach allows. Be that as it may – and always allowing for the truth that the Spirit blows wherever and however He pleases – the natural course of ministry in Scripture reinforces the reality that God and the growth of His Kingdom cannot be hurried along.
39. The Committee has resisted easy answers to the challenges outlined above. It is patiently pursuing an appropriate response to this particularly difficult task with active engagement and hope. In the meantime the Committee continues to commend the use of the Valuable Leadership resource to congregations. It represents a flexible leadership development tool useable in a range of congregational settings and is available on the PCI website.
40. The work of the Elders' Panel continues to develop the capacity of elders to fulfil and develop their leadership calling. Elders' Roadshows have been well supported in Carrickfergus, Monaghan and Ballymena Presbyteries. The programme in Carrickfergus and Ballymena has included a seminar delivered by the Conciliation Panel on healthy decision-making. This has been well received and represents an important overlap with this aspect of the General Council's remit.
41. A resource for clerks of session is now available on the PCI website. Two other resources that will be of interest to elders are in preparation: using the bible in pastoral visitation and reaching fringe members of the congregation.
42. The Prepared to Lead course has also been revised and updated. The content of elders' refresher training is also under consideration.
43. The Children's and Youth Ministry Courses and Road Trip regional training offer specific leadership development for those involved in children's and youth ministry.
44. June will see a residential Communicators' School focused particularly on building the skills of leaders in youth work to effectively communicate gospel truth to the emerging generation.
45. Proactively developing emerging leaders is crucial for the church's life. The Emerge course, now in its second year, has once again attracted

a large number of enthusiastic participants. Meeting four times throughout the year and then for an overnight residential, it offers support to congregations investing in younger leaders in whom they identify potential, as well as those who are beginning to find their feet in more formal leadership positions.

46. SPUD and the PCI Intern Scheme continue to offer other opportunities for leadership development as younger members of the church to find environments in which to explore their gifts, hone their skills and find their voice as leaders.

Youth Assembly and SPUD at the General Assembly

47. The Youth Assembly met in February. ‘Our identity as Irish Presbyterians’ was the theme. The gathering explored the perspectives of the emerging generation on aspects of church life which are cause for both celebration and frustration, along with those areas in which we are particularly challenged to change.
48. The Youth Assembly report giving further details of the feedback from the day and the particular aspect they will be taking forward will be published in Supplementary Reports.
49. Once again a SPUD residential is being held during Assembly week, encouraging delegates to experience this aspect of the life of the denomination and to speak, participate, understand and be involved in decision making.
50. Delegates to the Assembly will eagerly anticipate the SPUD fringe event on Wednesday evening from 5.45pm to 7.15pm. Those wishing to attend are reminded of the need to book places in advance via the PCI website or through contacting the Council office.

EMERSON McDOWELL, Convener

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

51. The Outreach Committee remains focused on envisioning, equipping and enabling congregations for the two clearly identified priorities of community witness and evangelism. These twin tasks of sharing God’s love and speaking the good news of the gospel can only function effectively in tandem.
52. Progress in developing this crucial area of congregational witness has been slower than anticipated due to two periods of vacancy in the post of Mission Development Officer in the first three years of the Council’s life. It now demands priority within the overall Council agenda.
53. With the appointment of a new Mission Development Officer in late January 2018, significant progress has been made on a framework for the production of a major resource. Its aim is to help congregations engage in local mission with a holistic approach, but always with an

eye to the ultimacy of inviting people to know Christ as Saviour and Lord.

54. The Committee believes that this resource will enable congregations to reflect in a simple, but serious way about the intersections between prayer, relationship, community and evangelism that are vital to the work of bearing witness to the gospel through the life of the local church. It will aim to build the confidence of congregations and their members to approach this task together and use their collective gifts to play their part in God's work of mission to the world. The production of this resource will form the major part of this Committee's work in 2018/19.
55. Overseeing the development of the Summer Outreach Teams programme is another aspect of the Committee's work. It has undertaken a major review of the summer teams' programme.
56. The review has collected insights from host congregations, the Organising Group (which delivers the annual programme on behalf of the Council) and two of the team leaders. The following six questions, based on wider, overall observations of the programme in recent years, have provided a framework for the review.
57. **Do we need our own denominational Summer Teams and what for?**
In an increasingly crowded and competitive market of summer teams, what is distinctive about PCI Summer Teams? Do we need them? If so, what purpose do they serve, and what priority should they have in the Council programme?

The review endorses the need for denominational teams for the purposes of:

- (a) Supporting congregations in local mission;
- (b) The development of team members in missional discipleship;
- (c) The growth of team members in confidence, gift discovery and ministry skills;
- (d) Provision of a distinctive and trusted PCI brand in a crowded teams' marketplace;
- (e) The benefit they provide to both receiving host and sending home congregations.

In terms of Council priority, it is recognised that teams will only ever be part of a much bigger programme and receive a proportion of staff time. Therefore, the focus should fall on ensuring continuing high quality, rather than expanding the quantity, of teams. It will be important to continue to think about the particular strategic contribution of summer teams within overall youth and young adult ministries. Greater linkage with young adult and leadership development programming would also improve the flow of potential team members and leaders. A more intentional provision of discipleship material for use in team devotions would improve effectiveness in this area.

58. **How do we decide where Summer Teams go?** *Should we be more proactive in seeking to assign teams to congregations or missional projects, or rely on those wanting a team contacting us?*

The review endorsed a policy of assigning teams that allows for both congregational application and greater proactivity in terms of creating a range of missional experiences. In particular, there is value in approaching congregations where a team could particularly enhance local mission, especially in the Republic of Ireland and/or in situations of new missional development. A valuable steer could be provided by ongoing discussions with the Council for Mission in Ireland. There may be merit in advertising the possibility of team ministry to all congregations. However, it is important to acknowledge that capacity to deliver on every request might prove impossible and therefore such promotion would likely be counterproductive.

59. **Should team programming be more all age?** *It seems that numbers at children's Holiday Bible Clubs run by teams remain high, but 'come to us' style youth ministry is less and less effective. Should we examine overall team programmes in the light of this observation? What other activities might form part of a team's programme?*

The review encouraged the exploration of a wider range of programming than the traditional Holiday Bible Club and teens work, but recognised that these remained important components in most places. It may be that the Council needs two basic streams of teams – those with a children's and youth ministry focus and those with a more specialist programme and all-age feel. There is a sense that envisioning around more imaginative youth programming is required.

60. **What is the partnership between team and host congregation?** *Should teams only be assigned to churches which will be able to take responsibility for running their own summer ministry within three years? If not, how do we avoid a dependency culture?*

The review recommended a more open and flexible approach to how long teams should be assigned to churches. It was felt that five, rather than three years was a more realistic timescale in which intentional transition from a team taking the lead, to a congregation undertaking ministry by themselves was more realistic. It was noted that not all congregations or projects to which teams are assigned should be expected to be able to take on responsibility for future work. While it is considered that strategic development of a team as part of a congregation's own development of mission was preferable, in some settings teams are making a particular contribution to an area of specific missional need e.g. inner city and Republic of Ireland. Capping team numbers at between twelve to fifteen members was also considered optimal in terms of both team dynamics and not swamping congregations and so impeding their contribution and hands-on input.

61. **How do we assess impact?** *Should teams be assigned on a time-limited basis and also be subject to review annually?*

This remains a difficult question. Annual review involving minister, team leader and organising group member should become the end piece to the team's work each year and set the scene for future development or cessation of the team.

A team's contribution to the creation of 'event feel' in the community, should not be underestimated. Assessing team impact, whether or not to reassign, or when to end a team needs to be a judgement taken in the round, however, further work to provide markers for progress may be possible.

62. **Can we imagine a different type of team?** *Should we aim to have at least one all-age team each year, not necessarily in the summer and not necessarily focused on children's ministry? Do we have examples of what those teams might look like?*

The possibilities for different types of teams was enthusiastically endorsed during the review. Ideas included:

- (a) evangelistic teams on the ground with congregations at community events eg as with previous team deployed to work during the Lammass Fair;
 - (b) presbytery teams partnered with another presbytery and working in both locations;
 - (c) weekend teams in congregations and/or at community events;
 - (d) teams focused on men's or women's ministry;
 - (e) teams trained in evangelism through reflection and practice that were permanently available to help in a variety of congregations and locations where opportunity presented;
 - (f) all-age and family teams.
63. It is hoped that the outcome of the review can help refine and develop the existing Summer Outreach Teams programme, which is largely promoted for those of 16-25 years of age, but also shape new and future directions for deploying short-term mission teams of all ages around Ireland in new and innovative ways.

STEPHEN RICHMOND, Convener

PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE

64. The Pastoral Care Committee continues to help congregations develop their approach to pastoral life around the three-sided framework offered by the pastoral life triangle. Its three aspects involve: developing the pastoral core of biblical truth applied to real life situations; developing the pastoral community of the church; developing the capacity of pastoral care in response to specific situations of need.
65. The concept of the pastoral triangle has been further illustrated, earthed and unpacked for congregations by the release of three DVD clips that explore each element. These are available on the PCI website

- and congregations are encouraged to make use of them in discussing and developing their pastoral life.
66. The Committee remains focused on finding ways of continuing to promote the Pastoral Life triangle.
 67. Other specific areas of pastoral care have also been directly addressed this year. An updated version of the booklet *Life after Loss: A Christian perspective on dealing with loss*, for use with those who have been bereaved, is now available for purchase. A new section on mental health awareness has been added to the Pastoral Care Training Course. The Committee is examining the area of prayer ministry as an aspect of pastoral care. It is also exploring the increasingly important, but largely uncharted territory, of faith in later years.
 68. An evening of Pastoral Care Training was offered in Newry Presbytery in April.
 69. Two important initiatives under the oversight of the Committee are the denominational counselling service and annual Family Holiday. The Committee has worked tirelessly in recent years against the backdrop of difficult circumstances to ensure the ongoing viability of both aspects of work.
 70. The relaunch and rebranding of the counselling service under the name Fresh Light was completed in September 2017. This has met with a positive response. An application process for new counselling supervisors has resulted in one appointment. This is an important first step in ensuring the ability to increase the capacity of the ministry offered. The next phase will be increasing the number of counselling volunteers.
 71. The Family Holiday, which ran at a significant financial loss for many years, has been reconfigured, reducing the deficit. More significantly however, the initiative has been substantially reimagined, reshaped and promoted as a means of supplementing congregational social witness to those on the fringes of church life or who have passed through a period of particular family difficulty.
 72. Central to this reconfiguration has been the partnership with the Presbyterian Children's Society in this venture. The Committee is grateful to the Society for its creativity in opening additional channels of grant aid allowing a more flexible approach to funding families to participate in the holiday.
 73. Moving venue from Share Centre, Lisnaskea, to Castlewellaan Castle has been significant in creating an environment for a more intentional community experience. Changes to the programme have also developed the potential of the initiative in creating a space for unbelievers to experience genuine Christian community along with appropriate invitations to encounter the gospel.
 74. The 2018 holiday was filled to capacity with some applicants disappointed at being unable to gain a place.

ALISTAIR BILL, Convener

WOMEN'S STRATEGY AND COORDINATION COMMITTEE

75. The release of a DVD discussion guide encouraging congregations to consider a more integrated approach to women's ministry in wider congregational life and witness at last year's General Assembly has proved a significant step. There is great potential to be unlocked in re-imagining the potential of women's ministry as an integral part of, rather than sitting apart from, the rest of the life of the local church.
76. The challenge for the Committee is to find ways of devising a strategy to begin to reposition women's ministry in the minds of the leadership and the whole congregation as being a key contributor to the core pastoral, discipling, missional, praying life and witness of the local church. In reality, in many cases, it already fulfils these roles. Often, however, that is not recognised, or the ministry fails to exercise its full potential because it is not integrated into the wider consideration of the development of congregational life and witness.
77. This year the Committee has focused particularly on how to develop the women's ministry element of discipleship. It is carefully and patiently exploring the best means of speaking on the issue into a wide range of real congregational starting points and situations. In this regard, it will be watching closely the next phase of the work of the Discipleship Committee as it seeks to equip congregations for more intentional, relational discipleship.

Presbyterian Women

78. The Committee forms a key interface between the Council's congregational focus and the particular contribution of Presbyterian Women delivered under the oversight of the PW Panel.
79. This year has witnessed an encouraging convergence of Council and PW themes. The speaker at the PW Forum in February was Rachel Jones, author of the *5 Things to Pray* resources also referred to under the report of the Worship Committee. This should helpfully reinforce congregational exposure to the challenge and opportunity of developing prayer life, which has always been a central emphasis of Presbyterian Women.
80. The *Wider World* magazine continues to carry the kind of real life stories of congregations and their members who are seeking to follow Jesus in a wide variety of settings and life circumstances. As is the case across the Council's work, the impact of such stories in envisioning the church in the breadth and depth of what it means to express our faith in the contemporary world cannot be underestimated.
81. Once again the Inspirations resource for women's ministry for 2018/19 was of a high quality in terms of content and production. This year's theme, Beautiful, is drawn from Psalm 27:4. It is unpacked in ways which bring together the teaching of scripture with the challenge of

its expression in real life settings as the people of God. The theme and ideas for meetings offer much to PW Groups, but will also be valuable to fire the imagination of other gatherings of women in congregational life.

82. The Alive women's conference in September proved an encouragement to those who attended as they commenced another church year of women's ministry.
83. The format of the PW Annual Meeting continues to evolve to balance the promotion and celebration of the work of the organisation and offer biblical ministry to those who attend. This year's speaker was Kate Patterson who unpacked the promise of God's blessing.
84. The home dimension of the annual PW Project for 2018/19 is to support the development of facilities and specialist training for staff in Trinity House, Garvagh, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's newest residential care home. The work of International Justice Mission in addressing the issue of cybersex trafficking is the overseas aspect of the appeal.
85. Generosity in giving to the Lord's work is a much-neglected aspect of discipleship. Presbyterian Women is owed the gratitude of the whole church for the way in which it continues to bring focus to passionately promoting and raising funds for the ministry and mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and other Kingdom causes.

VALERIE STEWART, Convener

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

86. The Worship Committee has responsibility for supporting and resourcing congregations in all aspects of public worship.
87. September saw the Big Sing event return to Assembly Buildings. Again there was significant buy-in from congregations who benefited from the resources provided for use in harvest services and from being brought together for mutual encouragement and learning. This time the event had a missional dimension with input from, and an opportunity for participants to contribute to, the ministry of Open Doors. The Committee has determined that future Big Sing events should happen as and when a particular focus and opportunity presents itself, rather than being programmed annually.
88. For a number of years Worship Academy has been a vehicle for the development of emerging musicians and worship leaders. The 2017 programme was again profitable for those who participated. However, the Committee notes that numbers remain small and have decided to explore other ways to approach investing in this crucial element of developing leadership in public worship.

89. Along with the Worship in the Discipleshaping Church event detailed above under the Discipleship Committee, two regional events entitled Simple Worship in the Smaller Church were held in Magherafelt and Richhill in April. In both cases, it was encouraging to see an integration of worship with other areas of the Council's remit.
90. The Simple Worship in the Smaller Church events represented a practical attempt to focus on the development of worship as one specific aspect of congregational life under the Council's Small and Fruitful theme, which has a particular focus on supporting and resourcing smaller congregations.
91. September should see the launch of a six-part Bible study resource aimed at enabling members to participate more meaningfully in all aspects of the worship service.
92. Entitled Encounter, its goal is to encourage a better appreciation of the flow of worship as a conversation and journey of encounter with God. Elements of worship explored in a contemporary way will include gathering; confession and assurance of pardon; hearing God speak; responding and being blessed and sent.
93. The Committee has also been assigned the responsibility of overseeing the task of envisioning and equipping congregational prayer life. The People of God 28-day prayer journey, launched in September, was effectively and creatively adopted by many congregations. Once again, hosting content on the PCI website to maximise the flexibility of the resource allowed congregations to take it and make it their own.
94. March saw the release of a short DVD clip entitled *Let's Pray* aimed at encouraging congregational prayer. Featuring Rachel Jones, author of the *5 things to Pray* resources published by the Good Book Company, the Committee was glad to be able to offer congregations a significant discount on bulk purchases of these titles in conjunction with release of the clip. This is the second promotion of this kind. Once again, it was widely appreciated by congregations and the Council is grateful to the publisher for their generosity in helping us promote prayer as a priority across our denomination.
95. There is much to learn from the format and popularity of the *5 Things to Pray* books. They are short, simple, scriptural and sharply focused on enabling members to pray meaningfully for church, world, family and their own walk with God. It is becoming increasingly obvious that these principles should undergird our approach to stimulating and developing congregational prayer.
96. Building on these observations, the Committee is working on a series of twelve simple, postcard-sized, prompts for prayer on a variety of themes for use in congregations. It is hoped that these will be available for the start of the new church year in September.
97. Two further initiatives are being explored by the Committee. One is the provision of a CD providing musical accompaniment for 40-50

popular praise items drawn from the *Irish Presbyterian Hymnbook*. This proposal is aimed especially at helping smaller congregations who struggle to find someone to lead music on a weekly basis. The second is a pilot event exploring the use of the organ in contemporary worship. The Committee identifies this as an experiment in enabling congregations in which the organ remains the primary instrument of musical accompaniment to take small, but significant, steps in developing their praise.

JOHN MURDOCK, Convener

YOUTH, CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY STRATEGY AND COORDINATION COMMITTEE

98. The Youth, Children's and Family Strategy and Coordination Committee continues to help the Council think strategically about this vital area of congregational life and witness. Crucially, it also seeks to guide the Council in the integration of this age and stage specific element of its remit into the core areas of discipleship, leadership, global mission involvement, outreach, pastoral care and worship. Encouraging progress has been made in both dimensions.
99. What is slowly happening at Council level needs to be mirrored in the ministry and mission of congregations if pathways for the journey of faith are to be created which enable transition from childhood, through adolescence to adulthood. The necessity of congregations finding ways to further explore and develop such pathways is coming increasingly to the fore in discussions of various Committees of the Council. Without intentionally creating such pathways, we will see children and young people ill-equipped for key transitional phases of the discipleship journey and continuing to fall through the cracks.
100. Another area with which the church urgently needs to come to terms is seriously reflecting on the challenges of reaching a generation of unchurched children and young people. Quite simply, most congregations have passed the tipping point at which they have contact with more unchurched children and young people than with those who have grown up in their church.
101. In follow up to a morning conference on the subject of reaching unchurched children and young people in May 2017, the Children's Development Officer has been working on three short Holiday Bible Club style programmes with a particular focus on starting in the world of the unchurched child. Some specific input on this area is also being filtered into Summer Outreach Team training. Much more remains to be done if the church is to grapple with the difficult task of reaching a generation increasingly characterised by a threefold lack of basic spiritual awareness, biblical literacy and familiarity with church.

102. A number of significant resources in the areas of youth, children's and family ministry have been released this year and are available on the PCI website. They include DVD and discussion material on mentoring, developing family ministry and effective use of the Close to Home material.
103. A comprehensive and very practical guide to schools ministry has been produced with ideas to both initiate, create links to, and build upon existing, relationships with local schools. Hard copies have been circulated to every congregation and the material is also available on the PCI website.
104. Another significant resource nearing completion at time of writing, offers DVD and discussion material around a variety of models for Sunday morning children's ministry. This is an important element of congregational life in almost every congregation. Changing realities in terms of numbers, availability of those who teach and the ways in which children learn, make this a vital conversation if children are to be integrated into church and disciplined in their fledgling faith.
105. Other resources in production include the repackaging and updating of material aimed at helping congregations explore the areas of youth participation and models for young adults' ministry.
106. Youth Link is an organisation in which PCI has been a major stakeholder since its inception. Following the denominational restructuring and the sharper focus of the Council on resourcing congregations to do youth ministry and mission, a profitable conversation with Youth Link has commenced leading to the identification of particular ways in which their skills and experience can be better harnessed in support of the local church. The Committee looks forward to building on these early discussions.
107. Major events such as Little Day Out, Kids' Big Day Out, MAD weekend and Youth Night continue to draw large numbers and prove helpful in the ministry they offer which supplements ongoing weekly congregational ministry. The associated resources offered for use back in congregations are intended to enable local expression of ministry on the themes developed at the events.
108. Three My Place events helped congregations explore the challenges and opportunities for more fully inclusive children's ministry that supports families and children with special needs. These were well supported and the positive response presents a challenge to the Council as to how to take this important message to a wider range of congregations.
109. Full time youth and children's workers in PCI congregations have been afforded opportunities for learning and reflecting through a series of roundtable gatherings throughout the year and an annual retreat.
110. Two other areas on the Committee agenda for consideration are teaching doctrine to children and young people and models for intergenerational worship. Initial, tentative exploration of both have commenced.

111. The Council functions in listening and responsive mode. With that in mind, two focus groups will examine emerging areas of need in congregational children's and youth ministry during the month of June and will report back to the Committee. This feedback will further shape and refine resourcing, training and the themes unpacked in major events.

SAM FINLAY, Convener

Developing Congregational Use of Social Media Task Group

112. This crucial area of developing congregational communication for ministry and mission in the contemporary world was brought to the attention of last year's Assembly by SPUD. A Task Group has begun working on a series of outputs that will build into a resource to guide congregations in best practice in harnessing the potential use of social media for Kingdom purposes.

Pruning for Greater Fruitfulness

113. It is never possible to accurately quantify the impact of any ministry. Jesus' parable of the sower is a salutary reminder that the same seed scattered widely falls into very different soils. What can appear to be growing well at first can prove short lived, while what can seem to have got lost somewhere beneath the surface may, in time, reap an amazing harvest.
114. The Council keeps a careful eye on the number of congregations engaging with the programme and resources it provides. From March 2017 to April 2018, 361 out of 541 congregations had attended at least one Council run programme, event or initiative. This compares favourably with a figure of 293 for a similar period in 2016/17. In addition, 207 congregations have purchased at least one core resource produced by the Council in the same period. Many congregations have engaged with the Council's output in multiple ways. These figures do not include the work of individual staff members with single congregations. This is an area of work Council is keen to develop and expand (see paragraphs 138-143 below).
115. The work of the Priorities Reference Panel has also proved useful in helping ensure that the Council is covering all aspects of its wide remit. The paper submitted to the Panel was the subject of scrutiny and discussion at the February Council meeting, with members encouraged by the breadth and variety of the ministry provided.
116. Numbers are not everything, however, and no response to a set of forms can fully capture what God is doing. The Council Secretary has been exploring other means of charting progress of the Council's work, assessing its ministry effectiveness and measuring the deeper impact on the transformation of congregational life and witness. Should this prove helpful, it will provide yet another way of developing eyes for the fruitfulness of the Council's work.

117. The Council report to last year's General Assembly included a significant section detailing the difficulties emerging from the complex structure of Committees, Panels, Task Groups and Organising Groups involved in delivering its remit. A resolution agreed by the Assembly authorised the Council to engage with the General Council to reflect on a structure which best ensures both appropriate accountability and ability to deliver its remit.
118. The Council has patiently and carefully pursued and developed this mandate. Doing so has involved engaging external input to shape organisational design, careful consideration of the views of Council members at both meetings of the Council this year, discussion with present Committee Conveners and staff, as well as formal engagement with the General Council. The Council is grateful for the input of everyone involved in this process. It is confident that the collectively constructed and rigorously tested proposal to streamline Committee and Panel structure, which will be presented to the Assembly for approval, ensures increasing accountability within a form that simultaneously best facilitates the function of serving congregations.
119. A fuller background to the issues involved and the details of the proposal can be found on pages 136-142, of the report of the General Council which will present the resolution to the Assembly. If agreed by the Assembly, the new structure will be implemented from June 2019. This allows adequate space and time for transitioning without significant interruption to the ongoing effectiveness of the Council's work.

The Fruitful Congregations Theme: Root and Branch Work

120. One of the intended outcomes of the proposed committee streamlining is to restore the Fruitful Congregations theme to its central place. Due to the number of competing messages and initiatives arising from the multiplicity of committees and panels, what had been intended to be a simple core image, with which every congregation could readily identify and which concisely conveyed what was offered by the Council, has become just another string to its bow.
121. It would be too much to suggest that all of the Council's work should be strictly aligned to the Fruitful Congregations theme, but it would certainly benefit from being attuned to it. There will always be a range of notes sounded by a Council with such a wide remit, along with a variety of instruments assembled to do its work, but that should not become the excuse for the production of a discordant cacophony of noise assaulting the ears of listening congregations.
122. In re-centring upon the image of a fruitful congregation, the Council has the opportunity to helpfully root everything it does in this biblical picture which it believes has particular relevance to congregational life and witness in this season of denominational life. As previously described, *Fruitfulness is more than faithfulness to the past in a changing world, often less than success in the eyes of a superficial world, always the growth of a Kingdom that is not of this world.*

123. The present spiritual atmospherics certainly require a willingness to lean into the future, but doing so will not necessarily see rapid numerical growth. It therefore becomes all the more necessary to look for signs of God at work that are steady rather than spectacular.
124. From this root should flow questions about fruitfulness in every branch of congregational ministry and mission. What does it look like for our congregation's leadership, worship, discipleship, pastoral life, prayer life, outreach and involvement in global mission to be fruitful? How do these expressions of fruitfulness draw upon the contributions of men, women, children, young people, young adults, families, singles, older generations? How do they speak into their worlds?
125. Developing the Fruitful Congregations theme as the root of the Council's work will involve building upon two areas where some significant progress has already been made – the Growing in Fruitfulness and the emerging Small and Fruitful agenda.
126. A number of congregations have already made good use of the web-based Growing in Fruitfulness resources found on the PCI website. Flexible materials for preaching, prayer, bible study and group work enable the sowing of the vision and the choosing of areas in which congregations discern God's leading to particularly invest in the next season of their life.
127. The Council believes that these resources could profitably be used more widely. A promotional clip explaining what the initiative offers can also be viewed on the PCI website. Ministers entering the third year in their first charge, and those who have recently moved to new congregations, are being proactively contacted to highlight the particular potential of the resources as they navigate crucial early phases of new ministry.
128. Last year's Assembly report identified that 70% of congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland have a core membership of under 150 members. This is where core membership is counted as those attending at least one communion service per year. This figure has been identified as the best approximation available from the annual statistics collected of the number of members likely, or able, to be actively involved in the ongoing ministry and mission activities of their congregation.
129. The reality is that most of our congregations function as small churches. This statistical analysis led to the question of what it might mean to be Small and Fruitful. To begin that conversation across the denomination, three regional events were held with guest speaker Karl Vaters who blogs and writes extensively on the challenges and opportunities of being a small church.
130. Turn out at the events was significant and positive feedback showed that the initiative proved a huge encouragement to many key leaders of small congregations. Council sought the specific feedback of those who attended as to how best to repackaging this theme for use in individual congregations. Already, the Council Secretary has had opportunity to

preach on the theme in a variety of locations. Council will continue to consider how to build on the important conversation that has been birthed.

Developing Presbytery as a Hub for Congregational Training

131. During 2016/17 all nineteen presbyteries were invited to engage with the Council to shape a programme bespoke to their locally identified training needs and maximising their opportunity to engage congregations and members within their bounds.
132. Response was limited and disappointing. However, two presbyteries, Tyrone and Monaghan, very successfully constructed programmes which the Council were able to support and deliver.
133. Tyrone Presbytery freed up its stated meeting in November to invite other key leaders from congregations to join members of presbytery for an evening based around the theme of Discipleshaping Church. A plenary session was followed by three breakout groups exploring discipleshaping worship, family and pastoral life.
134. Monaghan Presbytery utilised the existing gatherings of a Presbytery Sunday School Service, Ruling Elders' Fellowship meeting and PW LINK meeting as vehicles to harness Council input on children's ministry, use of the Bible in pastoral care and developing women's ministry.
135. In both cases, these initiatives proved popular and were made easy for presbytery to deliver by publicity and administrative support provided through the Council office. Perhaps as importantly, they demonstrated that presbytery can function creatively as a valuable hub to pull together groups of key leaders in congregations for training.
136. One aspect of the work of the Engagement and Consultation Task Group under the General Council (see pages 104-107), has been to explore the overall role of presbytery within denominational structures. One area highlighted is the potential of presbytery to act as a training hub. The Council for Congregational Life and Witness remains keen to develop this possibility. From September 2018, it will seek to build upon the encouragement of the examples above by beginning to work out a resolution passed by last year's Assembly to engage proactively with at least three presbyteries per year on a rotational basis in order to provide an agreed and accessible programme to envision and equip congregations within their bounds.
137. Doing so will only bear fruit if presbyteries are proactive in their response. If they are, this will enable the Council to better balance congregational, presbytery, regional and central training in the service of the whole church and its members.

Developing Enabling Ministry

138. The Council has developed its remit around three main means of resourcing and supporting congregations:
- (a) Envisioning – presenting possibilities and painting pictures of different ways of doing things
 - (b) Equipping – providing resources and training directly to congregations and/or upskilling key leaders to develop effective practices of ministry and mission in the local congregation
 - (c) Enabling – journeying with individual congregations as they work out, and work towards, realising their vision
139. In addition, the Council supplements these primary ways of engaging with congregations with an annual programme of larger scale events of the kind which require specialist expertise beyond that of any local congregation. An overview of main activities, training and events offered by the Council during 2017/18 can be found in Appendix 1.
140. Significant progress has been made in developing the envisioning and equipping agendas through regional training and resource production. Similarly, the annual programme of events continues to provide key moments in which to encourage congregations and their members who attend. The area most in need of development is that of enabling.
141. There are a number of reasons this enabling ministry is crucially important. Firstly, it is evident that it is becoming increasingly difficult for congregations to ask already busy members to attend extra events for training, envisioning and equipping beyond the normal rhythms of local church life. Secondly, even those who do attend and are encouraged and excited by what they have gleaned find it almost impossible to take that enthusiasm and learning back to others in the congregation who were unable to be there. Consequently, wider impact is limited. Thirdly, every congregation is different. Their particular story, challenges and opportunities can best be explored individually. Finally, if real momentum and change is to be developed, whole congregations, or groups of their key leaders, need to be engaged in conversation together and to collectively own the journey towards a different future.
142. The Council team of Development Officers represents a ready-made resource for congregations, available to facilitate conversation and help identify simple steps forward. Many congregations have already found their input helpful. The Council believes it is important that the church maximises their potential in the service of congregational ministry and mission.
143. This year has seen an intentional programme of staff training focused on understanding congregations, honing facilitation skills and reflecting on how to work effectively in group settings. It is intended to build upon this preparatory work by publicising the possibilities available to congregations to have Development Officers engage directly with them in developing a wide range of areas of ministry and mission. Requests will be dealt with on a first come, first served basis and capacity created

to balance staff time between the four responsibilities of envisioning, equipping, enabling and delivering events. The Council encourages congregations to take advantage of this enabling ministry in which the move from theory to practice can be explored and big denominational ideas can be translated into focused local realities.

Lost in Communication

144. The most frequently highlighted challenge for the Council remains in the area of availability of channels of communication with congregations and their members. In conversations and meetings of Council and Committees the three most often heard comments are, “we didn’t know”, “we can’t find” and “the online booking and registration system isn’t working”.
145. A resolution to last year’s Assembly tasked the Council with engaging with the General Council “... to identify and take necessary steps to improve mediums of communications with congregations and facilities for online booking and registration.” Early work identified some of the problems, however progress remains slow and the issue is crippling the development of the Council’s potential and is a source of widespread frustration across the church.
146. The Council recognises that resolving this issue is further complicated by pending changes to General Data Protection Regulations, an issue being addressed by a General Council Task Group. Nevertheless, it urges the General Council to revisit a number of key areas as a matter of urgency. Firstly, the exploration and development of an appropriate range of effective mediums of direct communication with key leaders in congregations. Secondly, while acknowledging the necessary breadth of information carried on the denominational website from all the Councils, the appropriate prioritisation of a more visible and accessible presence for events and resources directly related to the development of congregational life and witness. Thirdly, the resolution of ongoing issues surrounding online booking, registration and payment.

Active Hope in Congregational Life and Witness in Difficult Times

147. Writing to the church in Rome in the first century, the Apostle Paul encouraged a small congregation in a hostile world to “rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but also to rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.” (Romans 5:2-5)
148. Today, congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland face into their own difficult tasks. But let us be encouraged in God’s strength to face them with that active hope that is fashioned in us as we persevere in being shaped by the Holy Spirit in the character of fruitful congregations.

APPENDIX 1

Overview of main activities, training and events offered by the Council during 2017-18

Programme	Venue	Date(s)
Interns' Commissioning	Union Theological College	1st September 2017
Alive PW Conference	Assembly Buildings	9th September 2017
The Big Sing	Assembly Buildings	16th September 2017
Children's Ministry Course	Union Theological College	September to December 2017
Youth Ministry Course	Union Theological College	September 2017–March 2018
Disciple Makers Network	1st Ballymoney Presbyterian	A series of four meetings September 2017 – March 2018
Disciple Makers Network	Ballydown Presbyterian	A series of four meeting September 2017 – March 2018
Discipleshaping Church	Tyrone Presbytery	21st November 2017
Handling the Word	Union Theological College	A series of six evenings October/November 2017
Road Trip	Dundonald Presbyterian	10th October 2017
Little Day Out	Second Saintfield Presbyterian	12th October 2017
MAD Weekend	Ulster University, Coleraine	27th-29th October 2017
Road Trip	Ballyloughan Presbyterian	16th November 2017
Youth Ministry Course Residential	Castlewellan Castle	10th-12th November 2017
My Place Inclusive children's ministry	First Holywood Presbyterian	7th December 2017
Emerge Leadership Development	Several venues	A series of four sessions and one residential January – June 2018
Summer Outreach Team Leaders' Training	Assembly Buildings	3rd February 2018
PW Forum	Assembly Buildings	3rd February 2018
My Place Inclusive children's ministry	Muckamore Presbyterian	5th February 2018
Elders' Roadshow	Carrickfergus Presbytery	8th February 2018
Youth Assembly	Assembly Buildings	10th February 2018

Programme	Venue	Date(s)
Vision for Small and Fruitful	Assembly Buildings	20th February 2018
Vision for Small and Fruitful	Richhill Presbyterian	22nd February 2018
Vision for Small and Fruitful	Kilfennan Presbyterian	23rd February 2018
Elders' Training	Monaghan Presbytery	26th February 2018
Little Day Out	Elmwood Presbyterian	21st March 2018
Transform	Crumlin Road Gaol	23rd-24th March 2018
PCI Family Holiday	Castlewellan Castle	3rd-6th April 2018
Pastoral Care Training	Newry Presbytery	16th April 2018
Elders' Roadshow	Ballymena Presbytery	19th April 2018
Kids' Big Day Out	Wellington Presbyterian	21st April 2018
Worship in the Disciple-shaping Church	Assembly Buildings	25th April 2018
Simple Worship for the Small Church	Union Road, Magherafelt, Presbyterian	26th April 2018
Simple Worship for the Small Church	Ballydown Presbyterian	26th April 2018
My Place Inclusive children's ministry	Ballygawley Presbyterian	2nd May 2018
PW Annual Meeting	Assembly Buildings	10th May 2018
Ministry Certificates Graduation	Knock Presbyterian	16th May 2018
Full-time Youth and Children's Workers Retreat	Hilton Hotel	17th-18th May 2018
Communicators' School	Portrush Hostel	21st-23rd May 2018
Youth Assembly Residential	TBC	4th-6th June 2018
Youth Night	Assembly Buildings	9th June 2018
Summer Outreach Teams' Training Day	Assembly Buildings	16th June 2018
Summer Outreach Team	Ballyweaney Presbyterian	30th June-8th July 2018
Summer Outreach Team	Mullingar Presbyterian	6th-14th July 2018
Summer Outreach Team	St Andrew's Presbyterian, Bangor	14th-21st July 2018
Summer Outreach Team	Abbey Presbyterian, Monkstown	21st-29th July 2018
Summer Outreach Team	Dungannon Presbyterian	21st-28th July 2018

Programme	Venue	Date(s)
Summer Outreach Team	Seaview Presbyterian	28th July–5th August 2018
Summer Outreach Team	Whitehouse Presbyterian	4th-12th August 2018
Summer Outreach Team	Co Cavan	11th-18th August 2018
Summer Outreach Team	Gt Victoria Street/ Friendship House	11th-18th August 2018
Summer Outreach Team	Grange Presbyterian, Ballymena	11th-19th August 2018

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness be received.

COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY

Convener: Rev NJ McCULLOUGH

Secretary: Rev TJ STOTHERS

Executive Summary

1. The **Ministerial Studies and Development Committee** reports on the continuing low number of students for the ministry, a successful Ministry Taster Day and changes to student and licentiate expenses.
2. The **Union Theological College Management Committee** reports on changes within the degree programmes offered in College and challenges in the ongoing relationship with Queens University.
3. The **Reception of Ministers and Licentiates Committee** reports on its oversight of those who are applying to be received as ministers of our church and of those who have been granted the status of ministers without charge.
4. The **Deaconess Training and Selection Panel** reports on its oversight of the deaconesses presently in training.
5. The **Accredited Preacher and Auxiliary Minister Panel** reports on the training of further Accredited Preachers and the lack of further developments in Auxiliary Ministry posts.
6. The **Pastoral Care of Manse Families Panel** reports on the clarification of its remit and on a new proposal for the pastoral care of manse families.
7. The **Conciliation Panel** reports on its work of providing conciliation and conciliation training for the church.

Convener's Introduction

8. The Council for Training in Ministry will have met five times since the Assembly last met in 2017.
9. The Council continues to be encouraged by the excellent work being done in Union College and is pleased that this continues to be recognised by external bodies such as QAA and by the students themselves as expressed through satisfaction surveys. Nevertheless, as the report of the Management Committee indicates, the College is facing significant challenges in its relationship with Queen's University. The Council pays tribute to the work of the Faculty as it seeks to respond creatively to these challenges and especially to the leadership of the Principal.
10. During the year the General Council, in connection with Appendix 1 of the report of the Relationships with Other Denominations Task Group

to the 2017 General Assembly (GAR 2017 pages 77-84) to ensure that students for the ministry were adequately covering the doctrine of the Church and after investigating this question it is content that this crucial subject is being adequately covered and well taught. The Clerk of Assembly had requested that the Council consider how the contents of the Appendix could best be disseminated through PCI. This will be brought to the Council in the incoming year.

11. The number of applications for the ministry this year was disappointingly low and just four are being recommended to become students for the ministry. The Ministry Taster Day was however very successful and it is hoped that applications might rise in the near future. Anecdotally it would appear the most significant human factor in the pathway into ministry is the personal encouragement of a minister and other leaders and the Council encourages ministers and elders to see the encouragement of others into such areas of service as a vital part of their ministry. In addition, the Council continues to ask the whole church to pray for God to call people to the ministry of word and sacrament.
12. This is the second year in which applicants were required to have passed the Accredited Preacher scheme before they were interviewed. Several students have spoken of how helpful this has been in the confirmation of their sense of call, but it has thrown up some unexpected problems. It is the Council's intention to review the pathway into ministry in the year ahead and bring conclusions and proposals to the next Assembly.
13. The Council notes the retirement of the Very Rev Dr Alastair Dunlop as Convener of the Union Theological College Management Committee. Dr Dunlop has served in this role for a total of eight years (with the permission of the Nominations Committee) and has overseen the work of the College through a period of very significant change, including the stonework renovations and the appointment of the Principal and three teaching staff. The Council is deeply grateful for his service.

Students' Bursary Fund

The Rev Adrian Moffett, Students' Bursary Fund agent, writes:

14. The Students' Bursary Fund exists to make financial provision for students for the ordained ministry and their families, during their time of study.
15. In the academic year September 2017 - June 2018 there are 17 students in receipt of grants, all of whom are studying at Union Theological College, Belfast. The cost to the fund of grants, fees and all other expenses for this period will be £245,000. This is being met through offerings at services of licensing, of ordination and installations of ministers and elders and through personal and congregational donations as well as congregational assessment. Thanks are due to all members of the church who generously support the Students' Bursary Fund.

16. All those who have responsibility for planning a service of licensing, of ordination and installation are asked to ensure that full use is made of the Students' Bursary Fund literature (available from reception in Assembly Buildings), especially the Gift Aid envelope. Experience has shown that where literature is handed out at an earlier service, those attending the special service are more likely to make use of the Gift Aid scheme. It would be appreciated if any unused literature could be returned to Assembly Buildings following the service.

MINISTERIAL STUDIES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

New ministry and deaconess students

17. Four of the five expected first year ministry students and three deaconess students began study in September 2017. The ministry student who did not begin study has yet to achieve the necessary academic qualifications. He will continue to be recognised as an accepted student for the ministry and will begin study in September 2018, providing he achieves those qualifications.

Ministry applicants and the Accredited Preacher Scheme

18. The issue was raised of the procedure for ministry applicants who do not pass the Accredited Preacher Scheme. After discussion it was agreed that applicants in this position should be encouraged to go forward for interview because the consideration and feedback of the panel may be encouraging and beneficial in discerning the Lord's will for their future. The Committee also felt it would be helpful if two assessors were appointed when a second assessment was needed for trainees.

Interviews of ministry applicants

19. Six candidates for ordained ministry were interviewed on 26th and 26th March 2018. The interviewing panels comprised; Mr Joe Campbell, Rev Amanda Best, Rev Niall Lockhart, Rev George McClelland, Rev Jane Nelson, Rev Robin Brown, Rev Karen Campbell, Rev Daryl Edwards, Dr Lena Morrow and Rev Mark Johnston. The input of HealthLink360 has proven to be of growing worth to the panels. Having completed the process, four candidates are being nominated to the General Assembly by the Council.

Ministry Taster Day

20. A Ministry Taster Day for potential ministry enquirers was held on 2nd December 2017. This proved to be a very valuable event with a total of 65 people attending including a number of spouses and ministers. The

speakers at the event shared some very helpful information, and there had been a number of significant conversations with attendees, some of whom stated that they believed the Lord was leading them to apply for ministry at some point in the future. It was agreed that consideration should be given to holding a similar event in two or three years' time.

Changes to Queen's University of Belfast Timetable

21. In response to changes in the QUB timetable involving the start of semester two being moved forward to the first Monday in January following the New Year, it was agreed that:
 - (a) The first year winter placement should be abolished.
 - (b) Students should be required to undertake a summer assistantship of approximately fourteen weeks at the end of both first and second years. There would also be a four week period of leave each summer.
 - (c) The location of these would be a matter for the Assignments Panel.
 - (d) Congregations would contribute an amount equal to two single supply fees per week worked.
 - (e) The third year student assistant placement would continue but that the six hours of weekly congregational work would be removed. Students would still preach once per month, and are available to participate in services, attend session meetings etc.
 - (f) There would be a congregational contribution to the Students' Bursary Fund equal to the amount of one single supply fee per month during the academic year, i.e., seven months.
 - (g) Student assistants will not receive expenses.
 - (h) The student/trainee would begin full-time work in the congregation after the completion of his/her exams.
 - (i) Congregational contributions towards salary will increase to licentiate rates on 1st May.
 - (j) It was also agreed that:
 - (k) All students will be paid 40% of the Basic Ministerial Minimum annually by the Students' Bursary Fund, to be paid monthly.
 - (l) Family grants will remain unchanged.
 - (m) Students will receive no additional payment for summer placements.
 - (n) In year one and two this will cover a period of twelve months from September each year; in year three this covers the months September to June inclusive.
 - (o) Licentiates will be placed on the payroll on 1st July after graduation and licensing, and will receive a balancing grant for the months of May and June to make their payment for those months up to the starting level for a licentiate.

- (p) Licentiates will receive: a travel allowance equivalent to 80% of the Ministers' Travel Allowance, with no mileage element; and a Ministerial Duties Allowance of 42% of the figure set by the Linkage Commission for ministers. Both allowances will be paid via the Central Payroll. This is to take effect from 6th April 2018.

Licentiate Training

22. It is proposed to update licentiate training to include the continued use of current speakers but adding reflective practice in the areas of spiritual formation, preaching, pastoring, leadership, self-care/resilience, and a second project using material adapted from the former Board of Mission in Ireland's Mission Plan initiative.

Eligibility of Licentiates for a call

23. 18 Licentiates became eligible for a call on 1st September last with one candidate having his probation extended by 12 months

Sabbatical entitlement

24. To clarify some misunderstanding concerning ministers' entitlement for a Sabbatical, the following General Assembly report from 2011 has been included with the sabbatical guidelines and emailed to ministers as an update.

As a consequence of an increasing array of scenarios concerning applications for sabbatical leave and In-Service training, the Ministerial Studies and Development Committee has sought to bring a greater degree of clarity concerning the claiming of expenses. While it is acknowledged that Ministers may need to find 'space' to engage in study or reflection away from the manse, thus incurring travel costs and rental charges, it was felt that travel outside Ireland or the UK should be facilitated only if a Minister genuinely needs to visit a specific location or engage in a particular context for the actual purpose of that sabbatical or In-Service training. The Committee agreed that this is an appropriate, and indeed necessary, restriction on claims for travel and/or accommodation. (Reports, 2011, p.203)

Post-ordination Conferences

25. The programme for 2018 is in place and features David Powlison, Helen Thorne, Steve Midgley and Andrew Collins on the theme of pastoral care in the local church. Accommodation for 2019 has been booked and Christopher Ash is the keynote speaker.

Pre-retirement Conferences

26. Two conferences were necessary this church year due to increased numbers accepting the invitation to attend. The conferences are greatly appreciated by attendees.

ANDREW FAULKNER, Convener

UNION THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

27. The Committee welcomed the appointment at last year's General Assembly of the Rev Dr Michael McClenahan as Professor of Systematic Theology and is delighted with his contribution to the life and witness of the College. The Faculty is functioning well and delivering quality theological education. During the academic year 2017/18, Professor Gordon Campbell was on sabbatical leave during the second semester.
28. Following last year's very positive report from the major triennial visit of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, this year's QAA Annual Monitoring Visit confirmed continuing good practice. "The College continues to foster and build on the strong sense of community and trust between students and staff. Students met during the visit were unanimous in their praise of support provided by staff and the meticulous care taken to foster personal growth and academic attainment." The outcome of the Monitoring Visit concluded: "Union Theological College, Belfast, has made acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, evaluate and enhance its higher education provision from the October 2016 Higher Education Review."
29. Preparations continue for the launch in September of the new QUB Joint BA in Theology course which offers a broad-based module available to all students in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences – "Religion, Faith and Society: perspective on belief". While this is an exciting opportunity to broaden the appeal of theology to a wider body of students, it is important to remember that the re-invigorated QUB BD programme (reconstructed under the three areas of Biblical Studies and Biblical Languages, Systematic Theology and Ministerial Praxis) is the one more suited to ministry students and also the pathway to further academic theological study.
30. The review of PTFI courses to bring them into line with the Framework for Higher Education continues, and it is hoped this will be completed within the next 12 months.
31. In the 17/18 academic year 17 ministry students were enrolled, 4 in first year, 5 in second year and 8 in third year. In addition, there were 132 undergraduate QUB students studying theology at Union (spread across 3 years), 36 postgraduate students, 3 Deaconess trainees, 12 A-level students and 12 Youth Ministry students. Discussions have taken place about the enormous potential of online-learning, of an updated College website as the portal into life and work at College, and of recruitment from GB, e.g., through representation at Christian festivals/gatherings each year.
32. RE/RS teachers from both the Controlled and Maintained sectors have been deeply appreciative of Faculty's help in teaching the new specifications for A-level courses. A Sixth Form Forum of around

300 A-level RE students was addressed by Dr Cole and Professor McClenahan and their talks were well received by staff and students alike. Dr Cole and Prof McClenahan were also pleased to accept invitations to teach Sixth Form classes in Rathmore Grammar School, Victoria College and St Malachy's College.

33. With the successful completion of the stonework restoration project, it has been quieter on the property front, although the College fabric requires constant attention to enhance both student and staff experience. Following an accessibility compliance survey, disabled door access is being installed at a cost of £70,000. Vision Panel doors (£10,000) are also being installed in the first floor staff offices, and Wi-Fi connectivity extended and improved (£15,000).
34. The Committee is grateful for the hard work and commitment of the Bursar and support staff, some of whom were new to the College this year. All have settled in well despite the steep learning curve.
35. The Memorandum of Understanding which regulates the relationship between QUB and the College has been renewed for one year only in each of the last two years, an unsatisfactory state of affairs, so recent mention of a five-year Memorandum was viewed as a positive development. However, a QUB Discussion Paper about financial arrangements for the delivery of Theology has lessened the positivity because of very serious implications for the College, and for the Church, if its draft proposals are implemented. In essence, by the year 2021 they would lead to an annual loss to the College of £264,000 – i.e., £140,000 loss in tuition income because the new BA in Theology degree is a joint degree and the income would be split 70/30 between UTC and QUB, and £124,000 representing half the costs of the Institute of Theology. Clearly, such annual losses would be unsustainable and would threaten the College's participation in the future of theology at QUB.
36. The Committee unanimously adopted a response to the Discussion Paper prepared by the Principal, contesting UTC's liability for the Institute's administrative costs, asking for the reduced tuition income to be shelved for a year to allow the College to prepare, and pointing out the risk to the place of theology at QUB with consequent detriment to the well-being of society. In response to the Committee's response, QUB has suggested a further one-year Memorandum of Understanding to cover the 18/19 academic year and allow some time for preparation.
37. At the time of writing, discussions continue, and a further report will be brought to the Assembly. The preferred outcome is, of course, a satisfactory arrangement with QUB, but it should be noted that if a satisfactory arrangement with QUB cannot be found the College will have to consider other options, all of which are likely to necessitate radical cuts to the College budget.

RECEPTION OF MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES COMMITTEE

38. The Committee has met five times since the 2017 General Assembly.

Enquiries

39. Six people contacted the Committee during the year for information about transferring to the ministry of PCI but none of these has, as yet, followed through with a formal application.
40. One person from USA applied for permission to preach in vacancies, but this application has not yet been supported by the required documents.

Transferring Minister

41. The Rev Günther Andrich, a Minister of the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa, continues in a two year assistantship at Elmwood in Lisburn, having been formally assessed by the Committee on the completion of six months and again at one year, with a view to final assessment at the end of August 2018.

Applications

42. The Rev Andras Gilicze, a minister in the Hungarian Reformed Church, who had previously completed a guided week of exploration in Irish Presbyterian congregations and subsequently submitted a formal application to transfer to PCI, was assessed by HealthLink360 and interviewed by the Committee on 17th October 2017. The interview panel recommended his approval, and he has commenced assessed assistantship in Stormont on 5th February 2018, alongside further studies in Union College.
43. The Rev Dr Zachary Cole, an ordained minister from U.S.A., and currently teaching in Union College, having submitted a formal application to transfer to PCI, was assessed by HealthLink360 and interviewed by the Committee on 30th November 2017. The interview panel, which included a nominee from the General Council, recommended his approval, and he has commenced assessed assistantship in Maze, alongside further studies in Union College. This assistantship is tailored to fit with Dr Cole's College teaching role, and will include two summers as full-time assistant to the Conveners of specified vacant rural congregations.
44. The Rev Laszlo Orban, an ordained minister of the Hungarian Reformed Church (in Romania), who had previously completed a guided week of exploration in Irish Presbyterian Churches and subsequently submitted a formal application to transfer to PCI, was assessed by HealthLink360 and interviewed by the Committee on 5th

December 2017. The interview panel recommended his approval, and he will shortly commence assessed assistantship, alongside further studies in Union College.

45. In addition to all other individual study requirements specified in consultation with the Principal of Union College, all Transferring Ministers are now required to audit the intensive Irish Church History course in addition to participating in the Ministry Track Irish Church History tutorials.

Licentiates and Ministers without charge

46. Under the Code, Par 219(4), presbyteries seek authorisation through the Committee for the retention of Licentiates not serving an assistantship under Code Par 219A, and of Ministers without charge. Following a recommendation from the General Council, the Committee last year adopted an approach which was more fully in line with the Code than in previous years. Some of the procedures and documentation were adjusted in the light of last year's returns. The Committee is grateful to clerks of presbytery for making returns in good time so that the great majority of requests have been received in time for recommendations to be included in the Report Book.
47. The list of recommendations is included in Appendix 2.

Rules for receiving Transferring Ministers

48. Following the removal of some paragraphs from the Code at the time of the implementation of the new structures in 2014, the Committee has been aware that there is a need to have a more fully defined process for receiving Transferring Ministers. Operating principles (or 'rules') have been drawn up and implemented fully on a trial basis during the past year, in relation to individuals who have themselves applied to be received by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (Appendix 3 paragraphs 1-15 and 17).
49. In addition to applications from individuals seeking themselves to transfer to the ministry of our Church, there are two other scenarios which may arise from time to time, viz.: (i) where a Council of the church seeks the reception of a minister in order to facilitate the work of that Council; (ii) where a vacancy commission of a congregation seeks to approve the placing of a minister from another denomination on a list for hearing. For these specific scenarios three options are presented to General Assembly (Appendix 3 paragraph 16) with the recommendation of Council that option (b) be adopted.

ALBERT AP BAXTER, Convener

Recognised Ministries

The Rev Dr WJP Bailie, Mission Africa, writes:

50. Mission Africa (The Qua Iboe Fellowship) is one of Ireland's oldest mission agencies, in 2017 celebrating its 130th anniversary. We look forward with humble yet confident expectation to the years ahead, praying that God might continue to be pleased to use the mission for His sovereign purposes.
51. The mission concentrates on three areas of ministry: 1) evangelism and Church planting; 2) the strengthening of existing Church bodies through theological education; 3) medical and compassionate ministry, especially amongst disadvantaged and abused children. These ministries are carried out in partnership with various evangelical African denominations, and often with like-minded western mission agencies. Mission Africa is a member of Global Connections (Evangelical Missionary Alliance) and Mission Agencies Partnership. I am particularly pleased to report warm relations with the Council for Global Mission.
52. The mission continues its work against a background of financial challenge, an ever diminishing interest in foreign mission amongst western Churches and at a time when many within the Church cannot adequately distinguish mission and aid and development work. Nevertheless, we continue to send out full time missionaries and operate a short-term programme of teams and medium term placements. We also continue to operate branches in Scotland and England.
53. As Chief Executive I have responsibility for strategic planning; pastoral care of missionaries; supervision of personnel and finance; partner relations with a variety of churches and agencies, and I am particularly involved in promoting theological education in Africa. I am currently developing plans for police and military chaplaincy in Africa.
54. I am also grateful to be able to record that my status as a Minister in recognised service permits me to play an active role within my Presbytery (Ards) and in the Council for Training in Ministry. I am particularly glad to serve the Church through part-time teaching of Old Testament at Union Theological College, participation in the Accredited Preacher Scheme and ACF chaplaincy.

The Rev Dr Ruth Patterson, Restoration Ministries, writes:

55. Restoration Ministries is thirty years old this year. We give thanks for God for his provision, protection and encouragement over all this time. For this year of celebration we have taken as our theme 'Restoration through Friendship'. Perhaps there has never been a time in our world or our island where this is more needed than it is right now. Attitudes, even long-held entrenched attitudes, can be changed through the building of relationships. This has been our conviction and over the

past years we have continually sought, in different ways, to put it into practice, always held in faithful, believing prayer.

56. I continue to minister through spiritual direction, the giving of many retreats, reflection days and conferences throughout Ireland and beyond, the enabling of 'Faith and Friendship', and my commitments to L'Arche International. I am grateful for the resurrected interest in Contemplative Prayer and see it as a precious God-given gift for these anxious and anguished times.

DEACONESS SELECTION AND TRAINING PANEL

57. The Panel's primary focus for this year has been to oversee the training of three Student Deaconesses, Paula Burrows, Louise Davidson and Sylvia Santos-Bryce.
58. The three have completed their first-year full-time element of the new Training Course and are now on extended placements alongside serving deaconesses. Plans are in place for the further two part-time years. Thanks must be expressed to Principal Carson and the College Faculty for their delivery of the newly shaped course on Diaconal Studies.
59. Upon completion of her probationary term Rachel Cubitt was, in September 2017, inducted by the North Belfast Presbytery and has settled well into a new posting as Deaconess in the Congregation of Whiteabbey.
60. Heidi England is currently serving in a temporary capacity in the Ulster Hospital and HM Prisons at Hydebank and Maghaberry and, having completed her probationary term, she seeks to secure a call.
61. Resolutions have been brought from the Panel, through the Council for Training in Ministry, to the Judicial Commission regarding changes to the Code in order that along with students for the ministry, accredited preacher trainees and auxiliary ministry trainees, in matters of 'acceptance' or 'termination', deaconesses should experience the same procedures and review process.

ROBIN L BROWN, Convener

ACCREDITED PREACHER AND AUXILIARY MINISTRY PANEL

62. Due to a continuing lack of Auxiliary Ministry posts being created the Panel is not planning a 2019 course. 17 men and women have qualified to be called by kirk sessions as Auxiliary Ministers since 2015, but it has taken until March this year for a second post to be created. There

has been some general interest shown and informal enquiries made but no other formal applications by kirk sessions for an Auxiliary Ministry post. The panel continues to monitor the situation regarding the future of the scheme.

63. The Accredited Preacher Scheme continues to work well with 18 trainees being accredited from the 2017 course. Two courses are planned for 2018, namely the Belfast intensive course with the teaching element taking place over one week, July 2nd - 6th and a course being held in the Dublin area. This course will run on a monthly basis from April to November, excluding July and August. In total, 37 applicants have been accepted on to these two courses.
64. While the Panel understands that the Accredited Preacher course has great value in the training of accredited preachers for the church, it believes there may be signs that it is not the ideal prerequisite for ordained ministry application. It is mindful that the scheme was not originally designed to fulfil such a function, and believes that consideration may need to be given to it continuing to be used in this way in the future.

OSSIE McAULEY, Convener

PASTORAL CARE OF MANSE FAMILIES PANEL

65. The Panel considered its remit in enabling the Council to discharge its responsibility of 'considering all aspects of leadership training including responsibility for... pastoral care of Manse families', (Code, Par 275(3)) and resolved that: The primary remit of the Panel extends to Ministers whose work is in congregations and to their families.
66. To discharge this remit, the Panel endeavours to:
 - (a) encourage an environment of mutual care and support;
 - (b) when appropriate issue guidelines to presbyteries;
 - (c) organise opportunities for those who deliver pastoral care in presbyteries to share experiences and learn from each other;
 - (d) identify appropriate resources;
 - (e) maintain a list of people with relevant expertise who can be connected with ministers and their families where there is need;
 - (f) monitor levels of ministerial illness;
 - (g) resource the Council in other areas of pastoral care.
67. In an effort to address the ongoing question of how best to encourage an environment of mutual care and support the Panel has prepared a report (Appendix 4). A resolution is appended which, if passed, will require the report to be sent down to presbyteries for discussion and comment, reporting back by 31st December 2018.

68. In February Panel members met with the current 1st year Licentiates. The Panel continues in its role in making them aware prior to their ordination of some practical realities of living in a Manse, what can be expected as they transition into ordained ministry, and what this will mean for them and their families.
69. The responsibility for ongoing care for Licentiates (including those who, not having received a call, are no longer serving assistantships under Code Par 291A) remains with presbytery as does care for Ministers without charge. Where appropriate, a Licentiate's home congregation should also be included in the support network.

GABRIELLE AJ FARQUHAR, Convener

CONCILIATION PANEL

70. The Conciliation Panel continues to work with a small number of cases across PCI. A variety of related training events has also been facilitated, for example, with individual kirk sessions and at elders' Roadshows. Two training days were also provided for licentiates and new deaconesses. It has been encouraging to see an increase in the number and range of training events requested this year.
71. In October-November 2017 the Panel also offered training to those interested in joining the Conciliation Service. The training was attended by 20 people, and 18 of those have now joined the service as conciliators and/or with involvement in training delivery. In January 2018, further training was offered to both existing and new conciliators on 'Conciliation Work with Groups'.
72. The Conciliation Panel continues to feel concern that, where there are conflicts and difficulties in relationships within congregations, an approach is not being made in a timely manner, or even at all, to the Conciliation Service Coordinator, in circumstances where the service might well be able to provide help and support. The Panel is working to raise awareness of the service, to encourage people to recognise the value of asking for support, and to enable them to see it as a worthwhile option for finding a positive way forward.

MARY POTTER, Convener

APPENDIX 1

SCHEDULE OF STUDENTS

ARDS	David Morrison	Union
ARMAGH	John Graham	Union
	Richard Hill	Union
BALLYMENA	James Porter	Union
	Chris Wilson	Union
	Mark Rodgers	–
NORTH BELFAST	Philip Houston	Union
	Gareth Keaveney	Union
	John McCracken	Union
EAST BELFAST	Sam Bostock	Union
	Philip Boyd	Union
	Ben Johnston	Union
	James O'Neill	Union
COLERAINE AND LIMAVADY	Robert McFaul	Union
DERRY AND DONEGAL	Peter Burke	Union
DOWN	Kevin Hargaden	–
DUBLIN AND MUNSTER	David Bingham	Union
NEWRY	Campbell Mulvenny	Union
	Richard Morrison	Union
ROUTE		

APPENDIX 2

Recommendations Concerning Licentiates and Ministers Without Charge

1. Presbyteries have sought authorisation for the retention of the following as recognised licentiates or ministers without charge under Code Par 219(3)(c) (i), and the Council for Training in Ministry makes recommendation as detailed. At the time of writing, reports are awaited on two further ministers without charge.

Ards

Rev Simon Henning to be retained as Minister without charge
Rev CD Mawhinney to be retained as Minister without charge
Rev David McKee to be retained as Minister without charge (retired)
Mr KJ Ward to be retained as Licentiate

Armagh

Rev JWP McConnell to be retained as Minister without charge

North Belfast

Rev LE Carroll to be retained as Minister without charge
Rev JSB Drennan to be retained as Minister without charge (retired)
Mr David McCarthy to be retained as Licentiate
Rev CI McKnight to be retained as Minister without charge (retired)
Rev WA Shaw to be retained as Minister without charge
Rev WM Smyth to be retained as Minister without charge (retired)
Rev FW Vincent to be retained as Minister without charge

South Belfast

Rev Dr LH Eagleson to be retained as Minister without charge
Rev JD Maxwell – a recommendation will be included in the Supplementary Reports
Rev KM Mbayo to be retained as Minister without charge
Rev JA Peacock to be retained as Minister without charge

East Belfast

Rev JM Casement to be retained as Minister without charge
Rev WJ Harshaw to be retained as Minister without charge
Rev Dr DJ Montgomery to be retained as Minister without charge
Rev BJ Walker to be retained as Minister without charge

Carrickfergus

Mr CMS Barron to be retained as Licentiate

Rev RJ Gilkinson to be retained as Minister without charge

Rev RJ McCullough to be retained as Minister without charge

Derry and Donegal

Rev DA Edgar to be retained as Minister without charge (retired)

Rev KG Patterson to be retained as Minister without charge

Rev JC Teeney to be retained as Minister without charge

Down

Rev Dr BCG Black to be retained as Minister without charge

Dromore

Rev WJ Todd to be retained as Minister without charge for a further year, and that the Presbytery be informed that he will not be recommended for retention next year if circumstances remain similar and he has not by then become a Communicant Member of a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Monaghan

Rev DJM Boyle to be retained as Minister without charge

Newry

Rev BAH Wilson to be retained as Minister without charge

Omagh

Rev JA Gordon to be retained as Minister without charge

Route

Rev Dr Victor Dobbin to be retained as Minister without charge (retired)

Templepatrick

Rev JL Tosh to be retained as Minister without charge

Tyrone

Rev WI Ferris, to be retained as Minister without charge.

NOTE: Since last year the following are no longer recorded as Licentiates or Ministers without charge:

DECEASED

Down

Rev Samuel Armstrong

ORDAINED

Ballymena

Mr SW Orr (by Ards Presbytery)

INSTALLED

Ards

Rev Dr SI Dennis

Armagh

Rev Dr Michael McClenahan

South Belfast

Rev CH Deering (by Omagh Presbytery)

East Belfast

Rev PP Campbell (by Dublin and Munster Presbytery)

Down

Rev CG Anderson (by Monaghan Presbytery)

Rev GR Stockdale (by Dromore Presbytery)

Templepatrick

Rev Dr WJM Parker (by North Belfast Presbytery)

NO REQUEST TO RETAIN RECEIVED FROM THEIR PRESBYTERY

Coleraine and Limavady

Rev CJ Aitcheson

Templepatrick

Mr MPR Fryer

APPENDIX 3

Rules to be followed in the reception of ministers and licentiates from other churches:

1. All applications from licentiates or ministers of other churches to be received under the care of the Church shall be made to the Reception of Ministers and Licensure Committee.
2. The term 'Licentiates' will be taken to include anyone who had completed their studies in another denomination and is eligible to receive a call within that denomination.
3. Potential applicants shall undertake a week of orientation within Ireland at the direction of the Convener of the Reception of Ministers and Licensure Committee, prior to formal application.
4. Following formal application, which shall be on the form prescribed by the Committee, each applicant shall be interviewed and a report brought to the Committee which shall have power to issue* and may approve or reject any application.
5. A minister or licentiate whose application has been approved in this way shall have the status of a 'Transferring Minister' (or 'Transferring Licentiate' as appropriate – hereinafter simply 'Transferring Minister').
6. A Transferring Minister shall not be eligible for call until he/she has successfully completed any studies and/or assistantship required by the Council for Training in Ministry: this assistantship shall normally last two years.
7. The assistantship will be the equivalent of a Licentiate Assistantship, including equivalent remuneration, except that an ordained person may in addition celebrate the sacraments.
8. The placing of the Assistantship shall be determined by the Committee in consultation with the Assignments Panel.
9. A Transferring Minister will be under the care of the presbytery in which he/she is serving as an assistant, but will remain a member of the denomination he/she is transferring from until installed or inducted in a charge within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
10. The Reception of Ministers and Licensure Committee will normally review and evaluate the progress of a Transferring Minister every at 6, 12 and 24 months in consultation with the Supervising Minister.
11. The Council for Training in Ministry may re-assign a Transferring Minister or terminate his/her pathway. Termination may take place either at the end of the period of assistantship or, if it becomes clear that he/she will not satisfactorily complete his/her studies and/or assistantship, at any point before that.
12. A Transferring Minister whose pathway is terminated ceases to have any status within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

13. A Transferring Minister who successfully completes the studies and/or assistantship required by the Council for Training in Ministry shall be deemed to have been received by the General Assembly and is thereby eligible for a call under Code Par 193(1)(b) or 2(b) as appropriate.
14. A Transferring Minister who has not received and accepted a call within twelve months of becoming eligible shall normally cease to be eligible.
15. A Transferring Minister may request a review of any re-assignment or the termination of his/her pathway, which will operate under the review procedures of the Council for Training in Ministry as applicable to a Licentiate. [Note this is the equivalent of an appeal under Code Par 146(1)(c), and the outcome is final.]
16.
 - (a) In cases where the reception of a minister is being sought to facilitate the work of a Council of the General Assembly or where a vacancy commission seeks to approve the placing of a minister of another denomination on a list for hearing, the Reception of Ministers and Licentiatees Committee may make special interview arrangements and the Council for Training in Ministry shall have power to issue or to refer the matter to the General Assembly. The Committee may apply certain conditions before the minister may receive a further call within PCI, including, but not limited to: specification of a length of time that must pass; a requirement to take part in post-ordination training applicable to PCI ministers; participation in mentoring arrangements.
 - (b) In cases where the reception of a minister is being sought to facilitate the work of a Council of the General Assembly the Reception of Ministers and Licentiatees Committee may make special interview arrangements and the Council for Training in Ministry shall have power to issue or to refer the matter to the General Assembly. The Committee may apply certain conditions before the minister may receive a further call within PCI, including, but not limited to: specification of a length of time that must pass; a requirement to take part in post-ordination training applicable to PCI ministers; participation in mentoring arrangements.
 - (c) In cases where a vacancy commission seeks to approve the placing of a minister of another denomination on a list for hearing, the Reception of Ministers and Licentiatees Committee may make special interview arrangements and the Council for Training in Ministry shall have power to issue or to refer the matter to the General Assembly. If approved, and subsequently called, the Presbytery, if the Linkage Commission so nominates, will appoint him/her as Stated Supply, on terms set by the Linkage Commission, and normally reflecting the Terms of Call. The Transferring Minister will carry out the normal duties of a minister of a congregation for a period of two years. It is recommended that he/she be invited to sit and deliberate at presbytery during that time.

The Committee will set requirements for College Courses and/or participation in post-ordination training. Following successful completion of the Committee requirements, and successful reviews of progress at 6, 12 and 24 months, the Transferring Minister will be installed by the presbytery as minister of the charge and have the status of full minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

- (d) No requests for the reception of a minister of another church to facilitate the work of a Council of the General Assembly, or from a vacancy commission to be able to place a minister of another church on a list for hearing will be granted. [If this is chosen then Par 17 is redundant]
17. No-one with an active application as a Transferring Minister, and not yet declared to be eligible for a call, may be approved for placing on a list for hearing by a congregation under the previous paragraph.

Power to issue was given by the Council on 19th January 2015: *That the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates Committee be given power to interview and issue on behalf of the Council concerning all applications from students, licentiates or ministers of other churches to be received under the care of the Church.*

APPENDIX 4

CARING FOR MANSE FAMILIES

Background

- 1 The Pastoral Care of Manse Families Panel, sits under the Council for Training in Ministry, pursuant of responsibilities given to the Council under Para 275 (3) of The Code:

*The Council [sc. for Training in Ministry] shall consider all aspects of leadership training for ministers including responsibility for:
... (b) pastoral care of ministers and manse families.*

A Biblical Understanding of Pastoral Care

2. In his 1992 book *The Contemporary Christian*, the late Dr John Stott set out how a biblical understanding of pastoral care will be rooted in the life and ministry of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.
3. The picture painted is of care rooted in personal relationship between the one giving, and those receiving, pastoral care. He writes:
“Jesus knew his sheep personally. As in the Old Testament Yahweh called Abraham, Moses, Samuel and others by name, so Jesus knew and called people personally ... perhaps the first and most basic characteristic of Christ’s undershepherds will be the personal relationship which develops between pastor and people” (J Stott, *The Contemporary Christian*, (IVP, 1992), p. 281)

4. Changes to The Code in recent years reflect an emerging understanding within PCI that pastoral care within a congregation is a ministry that may be properly exercised by both ordained and non-ordained church members. (See Code Par 35(b) and Associated Assembly guidelines)
5. Notwithstanding this the ‘pastoral care of souls’ is retained in our understanding as being a core aspect of the particular vocational calling of those ordained and installed as ministers of Word and Sacrament within congregations. (See Code Par 80(1)). If it is acknowledged that ordained ministers have a particular role in respect of the ‘pastoral care of souls’ within a congregational setting, a natural question arises, namely:

Who within our ecclesiology provides this ‘pastoral care of souls’ for ministers and their families?

Preliminary Considerations

6. In any discussion concerning pastoral care it is important to affirm the local congregation as the primary context of pastoral care. It should be a proper concern of a kirk session to ensure that this care extends to the minister and (where applicable) the manse family. Jesus used the language of ‘friendship’ to describe his relationship to his disciples. (John 15:15) Many ministers speak warmly of care that they and their families receive from (for example) a district elder, a fellowship group, or simply from ‘friends’ with a congregation. This ethos should be encouraged at congregational level.
7. Alongside this primacy of ‘the local’ it is important to acknowledge that the General Assembly has also asked that the pastoral care of ministers and manse families should be an area for consideration at a central church (conciliar) level.

Attending to our Responsibilities

8. Code Par 275 (3) places a responsibility upon the Council for Training in Ministry to consider the pastoral care of all ministers and their families. Whilst it is not the responsibility of the Council (or its associated Panel) to provide such care, it is the responsibility of the Council to satisfy itself that structures are in place to ensure that such care is provided.
9. Table 1.1 summarises the current profile of ordained ‘ministers’ within PCI:
 - (a) Ministers serving as ‘the minister’ within a congregation: 330
 - (b) Associate ministers / ordained assistants: 6
 - (c) Ministers active, but not in congregations: 31
(eg. Professors, Chaplains, Global Mission Workers, those employed by GA)
 - (d) Ministers Emeriti (including released): 245
 - (e) Ministers under the care of Presbyteries: 33

10. The context and circumstances of ministers in categories (iii), (iv), (v) will vary significantly. The particular pastoral needs of those in these groups is a proper concern of the Council and it may be felt appropriate, at certain times, to address issues (or indeed bring forward guidelines) as to how ministers (and their families) in these categories may be best cared for.
11. However, it is suggested that the primary context where these ministers (and their families) will properly receive care for their souls is within the congregation to which they belong as members.

Pastoring the Pastors

12. This brings us back to the pressing question, raised above:
Who provides 'pastoral care of souls' for those ministers (and their families) who, by virtue of their calling, do not have the opportunity of receiving the pastoral care of their congregation's minister? i.e. Who pastors the pastors?

Surveying the Scene

13. Significant strides have been taken, in recent years, within our denomination regarding an awareness of the importance of pastoring ministers and their families. This includes the *Guidelines to Presbyteries – Pastoral Care of Ministers and Manse families* (2014).
14. These Guidelines (designed to complement our 'old structures') looked to presbyteries to provide pastoral care for ministers (and their families) using either a Chaplaincy or Pastoral Team model.
15. In recent years the Manse Families Panel has sought to offer networking/ reflection opportunities for those serving in these chaplain (*pastor pastorum*) and pastoral team roles within presbyteries. It is evident from these meetings that there are presbyteries where these models are delivering a good level of care. However it is also clear (from the limited uptake of these opportunities) and from anecdotal evidence, that significant gaps remain in the pastoral care being experienced by ministers and their families within PCI.
16. A growing body of literature explores the issues that the sub group have been asked to consider. Such material points to two limitations in looking to presbytery (as a body) to be the provider of pastoral care for the ministers (and families) within their presbytery.
 - (a) The Code, Pars 69-79 sets out the 'Duties and Rights' of Presbyteries within PCI. The emphasis of these paragraphs is on Presbytery as a body of 'corporate oversight' (69(1)). The dominant language of these paragraphs (in respect of ministers) is the language of 'ensuring', 'inquiring', 'charging', 'summoning', 'pronouncing' and 'disciplining'.

Experience suggests that it is difficult for this body to function as a primary provider of pastoral care.

Burns, Chapman and Guthrie in an extensive, evidence based, study of resilience in ministry state the challenge in these terms:

“One place pastors generally do not feel safe is their local denominational meetings. As one Presbyterian put it: ‘I think presbyteries see themselves first and foremost as judicial bodies and not as pastors of the pastors. They’ve got the ‘court’ thing down pretty good. The ‘congregation’ thing? Not really ... There are no relationships of trust.” (B. Burns, T.D. Chapman, D.C. Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry*, (IVP, 2013), p. 85)

- (b) When congregations call a minister, members have a say in who will become their pastor.

This ‘call’ relationship lies at the heart of Presbyterianism. Pastors are called by congregations they are not appointed to them. Both the pastor *pastorum* model (and the presbytery pastoral team model) are very different to this. Both involve presbytery ‘appointing’ someone to become the pastor of people (namely minister’s spouses) who have no part in calling this person to the role. Again, anecdotally it is suggested that such an appointment process means (for various reasons) some spouses and families may be reluctant to engage with those who

Presbytery has appointed to the very relational role of being their pastor.

Developing a more flexible model

17. Is it possible to develop a more flexible model that will move us closer to an actual situation where ministers and manse families, within PCI, can over time develop a personal relationship with someone who is clearly identified (by them and by the appropriate structures of our church) as their pastor?
18. It is interesting that in both Old and New Testaments the structural life of God’s people was at one and the same time organised and organic. Structure was an important part of how things were done and yet new models emerged to meet the challenges and needs of new situations.
19. A phrase that occurs in the book of Nehemiah is instructive in this regard. In a chapter that speaks about leadership and family life within Jerusalem (Nehemiah 10) a repeated phrase is used “we assume responsibility” (Nehemiah 10:32, 35).
20. When people assume responsibility for something they instinctively have an ownership of it, and when that decision (as in Nehemiah 10) involves their families, assuming responsibility ensures that actions taken work for the family.
21. Having considered these things, the sub-group wish to propose a new layer of pastoral care for ministers and manse families be encouraged within PCI, namely:

That each minister should be encouraged to take responsibility for naming someone who they and their family would look to as their pastor.

22. It is suggested that this person (whose agreement should of course be sought) should be an ordained minister within PCI, but they would not of necessity be from within the same presbytery. Neither would this person of necessity be themselves in active ministry - they could (for example) be retired. It is envisaged that the minister would (where applicable) discuss the choice of this person with their spouse prior to approaching them. The key distinctive of this model is that this person would pastor this family in response to an invitation ('a call') to do so.
23. It is suggested that presbytery clerks would retain a record of who each 'minister's minister' is and that this record would be kept up to date.
24. It would not be the Panel's intent to disenfranchise any current pastor pastorum or Presbytery Pastoral Team from roles that they are effectively carrying out. If a presbytery was so minded these roles could continue as a corporate expression of a presbytery's desire to function in a pastoral way.

Summary

25. In John 10:14 Jesus said "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me." In considering these matters the Panel has been struck by the responsibility that the General Assembly has given to the Council for Training in Ministry; not just to consider the pastoral care of ministers, but to consider the pastoral care of their spouses and families. This is a weighty responsibility, to ensure that there are no structural impediments to those in manse families receiving the pastoral care that those in our congregations take for granted.
26. The suggestions (above) are offered in the genuine hope that they can help to nurture an environment, within PCI, where ministers, spouses and their families, can be known by name by at least one person (from outside their home) ordained by our denomination to attend to the care of souls.

An ongoing task

27. In its wide-ranging discussion the sub-group touched upon a major subject, reflected in the quote from Burns et al. in paragraph 14, which is, the culture of the Church. We are not as we should be. Relationships are fractured. There are many reasons for this – varying theological views; distrust; competition. Church structures create demand for personnel to run a multiplicity of programmes, committees and the many sub-groups that have mushroomed. These add stress to our ministers. We need to nurture a culture of Christ-like mutual care within the Church. This requires a theology of culture characterised by grace, which becomes embedded in consciousness and practice. This is a longer-term project needing wide consultation.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the following candidates, their nominations having been sustained by the Council for Training in Ministry, be accepted as students for the Ordained Ministry, and placed under the care of their presbyteries:

Name	Congregation	Presbytery
Billy Abwa	Second Donegore	Templepatrick
Matthew Horner	Glengormley	North Belfast
Matthew Kelso	Grange	Ballymena
Paul Lutton	Fitzroy	South Belfast
2. That the recommendations concerning those whose retention as Licentiates and Ministers without charge has been sought by presbyteries be adopted.
3. That Appendix 3 be approved as Rules to be followed in the reception of ministers and licentiates from other churches, including option (b) for paragraph 16.
4. That Appendix 4, 'Caring for Manse Families', be sent down to presbyteries for discussion and comment, with report back through the Deputy Clerk by 31st December 2018.

Consolidated Resolution

5. (a) That the assessment for the Ministerial Development Programme be set to raise £125,000.
 (b) That the assessment for the Students' Bursary Fund be set to raise £250,000.
6. That the Report of the Council for Training in Ministry be received.

COUNCIL FOR GLOBAL MISSION

Convener: Rev Dr SE HUGHES

Secretary: Rev WS MARRS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Council for Global Mission is tasked with enabling the co-ordination and delivery of global mission as determined by the General Assembly (Code, Par 115), and especially where it is beyond the ability of the local congregation and not falling under the remit of other mission councils, partners or agencies. This entails the development of a strategy on mission overseas, including partnership with overseas churches and sending global mission workers; promoting world development issues, including providing for an annual appeal; lead thinking on issues of global concern such as the environment, race relations, international relations (Code, Par 278(3))
2. In undertaking this work, it could be said that the Council provides a bridge or threshold between the life and witness of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) as a denomination and that of PCI's partners, so that out of the overflow of such partnerships, opportunities for mission engagement are seized and the stories of mission shared widely.
3. The Council met on three occasions since the last General Assembly. It continues to seek to fulfil its remit through the following Committees, Panels and Task Groups, while recognising the importance of collaborating with and complementing the work of other Councils:
 - (a) **Outreach Ministries Committee** oversees PCI's global outreach initiatives and is particularly focused at present on building teams to take forward church-planting in Europe (Pars 4 to 12).
 - (b) **Leadership Development Committee** supports Leaders in Training through their studies, whether in the UK/Ireland or around the world; and seeks to build vision for global mission amongst church leaders within PCI (Pars 13 to 33).
 - (c) **Global Concerns Committee** grapples with a wide range of issues in relation to world faiths, the stewardship of creation, inter-cultural and international relations, and in this report highlights the issue of climate change (Pars 34 to 55).
 - (d) **World Development Committee** addresses the challenge of global poverty through both the Annual and Moderator's Appeals, with a focus at present on gender justice and the prevention of gender violence (Pars 56 to 65).
 - (e) **Personnel Panel** oversees the support of PCI's global mission

workers, dealing with calls to missionary service; member care development; memorial minutes; and appreciations (Pars 66 to 7).

- (f) **Global Mission Partnership Panel** deals with all partnership related matters, including allocation of grants and in the past year undertook a review of partnerships (Pars 76 to 93).
- (g) **Business and Finance Panel** handles matters of strategy; finance; property; staffing; and risk analysis (Pars 94 to 103).
- (h) **Torre del Mar Task Group** undertook a review of the Torre del Mar Church Plant Project (Pars 104 to 110).

OUTREACH MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

4. The Outreach Ministries Committee seeks to initiate and support PCI's global outreach, identifying strategic areas of focus: church planting and evangelism; healthcare mission; conflict resolution; mission through education; integral mission; and Bible poverty.
5. In collaboration with the Global Mission Council's Partnership and Personnel Panels, the Committee seeks to share with PCI's global mission partners and to support global mission workers, wherever initiatives have a clear outreach focus. At present this embraces 19 partners and 29 global mission workers involved in a range of outreach initiatives covering nine countries. The Committee met on two occasions in the past year and reports as follows:
6. **Priorities for the General Assembly and its Councils:** The Committee devoted time to discussing the five General Assembly priorities (leadership, fruitfulness, discipleship, mission, community), and acknowledged them as a set of benchmarks with which to compare its current activities and ultimately sharpen its focus. Proverbs 16:9 states "In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps". The Committee was able to observe readily how the Assembly's priorities were already being met through the range of outreach initiatives PCI was engaged in overseas and to affirm the importance of the ongoing review of its strategy in light of these priorities.
7. **Church planting and evangelism:** Last year's Assembly Report highlighted key themes relevant to the Council for Global Mission's ongoing involvement in church planting and the General Assembly resolved to encourage the Council to continue to develop its church-planting strategy, especially in the Western European context. This resolution is an encouragement to the Committee to cement and enhance existing church-planting efforts.
8. The Committee was encouraged to hear that the church-planting team in Porto, Portugal, has been strengthened by the arrival of Pedro and Amada Falcão. Pedro is from Portugal and his wife, Amada, from Brazil. All being well, Chris and Rachel Humphries, Tartaraghan Congregation, will also join the team in the course of the year (see

Personnel Panel Report Par 69). The Committee appreciates that the resourcing of the work in this way is vital to the future growth of ‘Comunidade Pedras Vivas’ and, more broadly, to the envisioning and encouragement of PCI’s global mission partners, the Christian Presbyterian Church of Portugal.

9. During the year the Committee devoted time to considering the work of the Torre del Mar Mission Church Project and was represented on the Torre del Mar Task Group (see Torre del Mar Task Group Report Pars 104 to 110). The Committee believes that this is now a ‘kairos’ moment, an opportune time to pause and reflect on church-planting and evangelism strategy and engagement, especially the recommendations contained in the Torre del Mar Task Group Report. A time also to consider where and how God is leading PCI to be involved in church-planting and evangelism in the European context, with particular reference to Spain, but also reflecting on PCI’s work amongst migrant communities in London. To this end the Committee has set up a Church-Planting Task Group which will take this work forward.
10. **Bible Poverty:** A recent visit to Lebanon by Presbyterian Women representatives brought encouraging testimony of God’s work in the Middle East. Especially exciting were stories of how God is using the distribution of the Scriptures in Syria, in particular among children and young people, to impact powerfully the lives of many families, not least those facing severe hardships. It is important prayerfully to uphold and commend the work of PCI’s partners in this region - the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL), SAT 7, The Near East School of Theology, and The Bible Society of Lebanon.
11. **Engaging the church at home:** Last year the Committee’s report reflected on the challenges of mobilising the church at home for greater involvement in global outreach, not least children, teens and young adults, and the need for creative approaches to be explored. It was noted that best practice would involve co-operation with other Councils to reach the target audience. In this regard it is encouraging to report that collaboration is now underway with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness as it seeks to implement its “Go Deep, Go Wide” strategic plan for congregational global mission involvement.
12. **Containers for Malawi:** For many years the Council has been closely associated with a Malawi Container Group, involving PCI members alongside others. The Group has been committed to filling and sending out containers with educational and medical resources to the schools and mission hospitals of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Malawi. While containers continue to be sent out, a decision needs to be taken whether the Container Group should be newly constituted under the supervision of the Council for Global Mission and the Committee has set up a task group to consider this question.

DAVID STEELE, Convener

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

13. Recognising the growth and vitality of the Church in many parts of the world and the challenges such growth brings, the Leadership Development Committee works along with partner churches and institutions for the development of mature, experienced, Christian leadership around the world. This endeavour is in line with the priorities for Councils set by the General Assembly 2017, in particular the development of effective leadership according to biblical patterns and expectations, and also investment in the fruitfulness of PCI's life and witness.
14. The Committee's work involves liaising with the Global Mission Personnel Panel on the placement, support, review and evaluation of Global Mission Workers involved in leadership development; liaising with the Global Mission Partnership Panel on the provision of leadership development grants to partner churches and institutions; and ensuring the story of leadership development is told widely through the PCI website, magazine articles and prayer resources.
15. In the past year the Committee considered possible new partnerships with a leadership development focus. Potential involvement with Southern Theological Seminary (STS), Argentina, remains under consideration, but the Committee believes there would need to be very good reasons for taking this relationship further at this time. PCI's focus, first and foremost, would need to be on building church-to-church relationships in this context.
16. The Committee underlined the importance of grassroots theological training as it confirmed its support and the strategic value of PCI partnering with Theological Education by Extension College, (TEEC) South Africa, whilst resolving to continue their support for Theological Education by Extension Malawi, (TEEM) especially through its forthcoming period of transition in leadership.
17. The Leaders in Training Panel continues to oversee the provision of scholarship funding for partner church 'Leaders in Training' whether for study in the UK, Ireland or further afield. Where required, the Panel liaises with universities and colleges, ensures the provision of pastoral care, reception and orientation for Leaders in Training, and provides guidelines to congregations for sponsoring and supporting Leaders in Training. Leader in Training scholarships totalling £54,129 were approved for the year 2018.
18. The Panel also assists in the preparation of scholarship applications for submission to the Lindsay Memorial Fund. In this regard, it is good to report that Mr Paul Kawale, a health systems researcher who designs and implements public health interventions at Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Nkhoma Hospital, Malawi, successfully defended his PhD thesis on Global Health at Edinburgh University in March 2018 after which he visited Belfast and met with those with an

interest in healthcare mission. The Lindsay Memorial Fund is currently supporting three members of Faculty at Zomba Theological College, Malawi, each undertaking a PhD by distance through Aberdeen University, only travelling to Aberdeen for 'Summer Schools'.

19. The importance of being able to recount 'stories' to celebrate how God has blessed the ongoing work of scholarship and grant recipients was highlighted by the Committee in the course of its engaging in a communications review.
20. The Global Envisioning Panel seeks to envision PCI ministers and students for the ministry through providing an annual series of lectures on the Missiological Short Course and a Licentiates Training Day at Union Theological College (UTC). It also does its best to facilitate overseas missional opportunities for ministers and others in PCI's leadership as part of their sabbatical study so as to promote missiological insight and experience, not least through the witness and example of global Christian leaders from PCI's partners, especially those serving in the context of persecution and hardship. In January 2018 one PCI minister took part in a Ministers Envisioning Team to the Philippines facilitated by the Global Envisioning Panel in collaboration with one of PCI's Specialist Service Agency partners, Wycliffe Bible Translators.
21. On occasions, members of UTC Faculty, PCI ministers and other Presbyterians are supported as they volunteer to undertake concentrated, short-term visits to deliver theological training in global mission partner church training institutions.
22. **Overseas Visits:** The following overseas visits took place with a leadership development focus:
23. **Malawi and Kenya:** Rev Uel Marrs visited Malawi and Kenya in August 2017, and explored the work of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) Lay Training Centre where specialist training is being given to ministers for mission parishes in remote areas. He also met with Rev Patrick Muthungu, Director of the PCEA Theological Education by Extension Programme, to discuss recent developments and the role of Naomi Leremore with the programme.
24. **India:** Rev John Faris represented PCI at the Church of North India Synod meetings in Delhi at the end of September 2017 and visited CNI Gujarat Diocese. Rev Sanjay Malaviya is the new Principal of Gujarat United School of Theology (GUST) and PCI's relational support is very much valued. It would be desirable to help the Principal to be upskilled to PhD level using a distance model, and to develop links between GUST and UTC both by UTC students visiting GUST for a month; and visiting lecturers being sent out to help with GUST's doctoral programmes. Aspects of the GUST infrastructure are in poor condition as the building is now 104 years old and financial support for maintenance and renovation is needed.
25. **Hungary:** In October 2017, Rev Dr Peter McDowell visited Balázs Ódor, International Relations Officer of the Hungarian Reformed

Church and undertook some introductory lectures in missiology at Pápa Reformed Theological College where he was hosted by Rev Zsolt Barta. While Hungarian students are currently coming to UTC under the Erasmus scheme, in terms of PCI's engagement it was agreed that providing an opportunity for Hungarian ministers to come to Ireland for short sabbaticals is a good model to pursue. The Very Rev Dr Ivan Patterson continues to be involved in facilitating groups of Hungarian ministers to come to Ireland, and PCI ministers to visit Hungary.

26. **Myanmar:** Rev Dr Peter McDowell visited Myanmar in July 2017, and reflected on the opportunities that exist for short term visits and projects. He noted the prime importance of building relationships, not resorting to a partnership focused on money as a result of geographical distance.
27. Discussion is taking place with UTC regarding the possibility of a member of the Faculty of Tahan Theological College (TTC) undertaking a Masters or PhD by distance. It was agreed that this be pursued under the Leaders in Training Panel in conjunction with UTC.
28. Rev Dr Ian Hart hopes to go to teach Old Testament at Tahan Theological College over the summer months in 2018.
29. **France:** Rev Prof Gordon Campbell visited the Faculté Jean Calvin in Aix-en-Provence in January 2018 where his focus was on continuing to deliver New Testament courses, along with preaching responsibilities.
30. **Latvia:** In March 2018 Rev Prof Gordon Campbell engaged in a week of intensive teaching in John's Gospel at the Baltic Reformed Theological College where he was encouraged by the good attendance.
31. **Lebanon:** Rev Uel Marrs visited Lebanon along with Mrs Elma Leeburn, PW President, and Mrs Pauline Kennedy, Women's Ministry and PW Development Officer. They had a short meeting with Rev George Sabra, Principal of the Near East School of Theology and the focus of that discussion was on the newly published Institutes of John Calvin, two volumes, which have now for the first time been translated into Arabic. The first 1,000 copies have been printed and sold to ministers in the Middle East and North Africa with the hope of a reprint, funding permitting, in the near future.
32. **Jordan:** Rev Dr Martyn Cowan, Lecturer in Historical Theology at UTC is to lecture in the Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary (JETS) in May 2018.
33. The Committee expressed its congratulations to Rev Dr Peter McDowell on his appointment to lecture in missiology at Belfast Bible College and its gratitude for all that he has contributed through his involvement with PCI's leadership development initiatives.

JOHN FARIS, Convener

GLOBAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

34. The Global Concerns Committee operates in the interface between the local and the global, seeking to engage the Church with issues of global concern which impact those on this island and yet are much more wide-reaching in scope. Grappling with such issues is an extension of a commitment to mission and discipleship, challenging how PCI thinks, acts and interacts with the world. In an increasingly diverse and secular local context these issues will only become more relevant.
35. In this regard PCI has so much to learn from partners locally and around the world; people who have experienced living with some of these challenging issues. This is particularly so in the interface between world faiths, in contexts of civil conflict and religious persecution, and as people grapple with changing climate and natural disasters.
36. The Committee has engaged in some preliminary exploration of a theology of suffering, seeking to tease out key questions and the lessons for PCI. The faith and resilience, grace and compassion of many in PCI's partner churches has been especially inspirational and provides context and motivation to the work of the Committee's respective panels.

WORLD FAITHS PANEL

37. The World Faiths Panel, convened by Rev Robin Quinn, continues to seek ways to lead thinking within PCI in regards to other world faiths. Initially the focus has been on Islam, compiling a list of resources and questions that church members may be asking. Having piloted the Interserve Friendship First course the Panel is exploring channels to encourage congregations to use it where appropriate, including through a review in the Herald.
38. '30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World' has proved to be a useful resource and will be made available again in advance of Ramadan, which this year is from 16th May to 14th June. A similar 15-day resource on the Hindu world, produced by Interserve and which would be promoted during the Diwali Festival in November, is being considered.
39. The Panel has also been researching the numbers of Muslims in both jurisdictions on the Island of Ireland. The 2016 Census for the Republic of Ireland shows that there are 63,400 people who call themselves Muslim. In Northern Ireland, the 2011 Census does not give a breakdown of 'other religions' of which there are 0.82% or 14,849. These are spread throughout the province with the biggest concentrations in South and East Belfast and North Down. The website of the Belfast Islamic Centre – which is now situated in the former Aldersgate House on University Road – claims there are 6,000 Muslims in Northern Ireland with the majority in Belfast.

40. In response to a clear need for more information, the Panel is drawing up a positive statement on the uniqueness of the Christian Faith which will provide direction for engagement with people of other faiths. Starting from the supremacy and uniqueness of Jesus Christ and an affirmation of what PCI believes, it would then proceed to provide guidance on how to engage with people of other faiths. This would include showing respect and sensitivity, avoiding a militant approach and loving people with whom Christians may not agree.
41. The aim is to equip church members to know and be able to give a reason for what they believe in relation to anyone else, be they Muslim, Hindu, of other faiths or none, and thus building up their confidence to articulate their faith and engage with those around them.

STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION PANEL

42. The Stewardship of Creation Panel, following its interim report to the 2017 General Assembly, has developed a more comprehensive report for the 2018 General Assembly (see Appendix A). The Panel, led by Convener, Rev John Hanson, is to be commended for their work.
43. It is important to acknowledge that, while the vast majority of scientists agree on human induced climate change, there is a significant and vocal dissenting voice. However, the Panel encourages all PCI members to be open to being challenged by this issue and to view it as an essential aspect of discipleship.
44. The Panel believes that it is important that the thrust, energy and spirit of the paper communicates the need for God's love through the respect and care for God's property and highlighting love for one's neighbour, both near and far. This is especially the case for people who are vulnerable. Those in poverty are most likely to bear the brunt of adverse climate conditions.
45. Caring for God's creation and loving ones neighbours are core discipleship principles which must be reflected in Christian lifestyles. Small and incremental steps in adjusting how one lives including reducing, reusing and recycling, can make a significant difference.

INTER-CULTURAL RELATIONS PANEL

46. The Inter-Cultural Relations Panel meets regularly under the Convener'ship of the Rev Helen Freeburn. Immigration continues to be a 'hot topic'. Sadly, the human dimension can often be lost in the rhetoric and statistics.
47. The Panel continues to develop a Bible Study resource on the Book of Ruth, exploring Ruth's story as an immigrant coming to live in the midst of God's people. This will be a series of six studies which help

us to engage with the biblical text and issues relating to immigration. A complementary audio visual resource relating stories from relevant people and congregations is being developed in tandem. Conversations with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness and with the Creative Production Department are on-going.

48. Syrian refugees continue to arrive in Northern Ireland on a regular basis. There are over 800 to date and this number is expected to double under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. The vast majority are Muslim and are dispersed throughout Northern Ireland. About 2,000 have arrived in the Republic of Ireland since the beginning of 2016 under a similar scheme, but the approach here has been more centrally controlled, leading to challenges regarding integration.
49. There are a number of other interesting developments in the Republic of Ireland regarding immigration. These include the Irish Government's commitment to introduce a community refugee sponsorship scheme similar to that of Canada. As in Canada, it is hoped that churches will take a leadership role in sponsoring refugees when this scheme begins. Secondly, a Supreme Court ruling has required the Irish Government to give asylum seekers access to the labour market. However, Churches and other non-government bodies are concerned that the new scheme is so restrictive as to effectively prevent access.
50. Over the past year the Panel has reviewed historic relationships with other bodies. As a result the decision was taken not to continue links with Diakonia Council of Churches in South Africa. While respecting the good work they have done and are doing, and acknowledging that there is still much to be done in the developing of the new South Africa, it was felt that as far as inter-cultural relations was concerned, PCI's focus should lie elsewhere. On the other hand it was agreed that PCI's relationship with local partner Embrace should be strengthened.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PANEL

51. The International Relations Panel is convened by the Rev Dr Donald Watts. The focus of this Panel is on the Middle East with two particular spheres of interest; Syria/Lebanon and Israel/Palestine. Relationship building is undoubtedly the way to a better understanding of the complexities of the region. Key to this is strengthening PCI's relationship with the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL).
52. A recent visit by Presbyterian Women representatives to the region, accompanied by Rev Uel Marrs, was very positive. One aspect of this was following up on the PW Project in support of NESSL's Damascus Congregation, building on the historical involvement of Irish Presbyterian Missionaries who originally planted this congregation in 1866.

53. The Panel is exploring how best to build on these relationships. Possible options include an envisioning trip to Lebanon to connect with NESSL and further historic links with the Near East School of Theology (NEST).
54. The Israel/Palestine situation is a massive and complex issue. The Panel is currently exploring whether the organisation 'Musalaha' is an appropriate entry point to a better understanding of the situation. Musalaha is dealing with reconciliation between Messianic Jews and the Palestinian Christians. Two members of the organisation, Salim Munayer, an Arab Christian, and Lisa Loden, a Messianic Jew, were in Northern Ireland at the invitation of the Bangor Worldwide Missionary Convention last August, and met with, among others, members of the Panel.
55. As each of the Panels has engaged with pertinent issues of global concern through this past year, and sought to be relevant and biblical in process and product, there is a sense of gratitude to God for His guidance, and a deep desire to bring glory to Him.

RICHARD KERR, Convener

WORLD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

56. The 2017 World Development Appeal was launched on Thursday, 19th October 2017 under the strapline, 'A Beautiful Idea: Women's Voices in Fragile States' This was the first year in a four-year map which had been laid out for the Appeal earlier in the year, a map designed to offer a longer-term perspective on sustainable development to the wider church.
57. In an ongoing partnership with Tearfund and Christian Aid, the four years will be linked together by an overarching theme: the challenges of sustainable development in fragile states, with a particular focus on gender justice and the prevention of gender-based violence. In years three and four, return visits to the partners highlighted in years one and two will enable PCI to receive from them a fuller perspective and deeper insight into the work they are doing.
58. In cooperation with Christian Aid and Tearfund, two workshops were held in Assembly Buildings in connection with the Appeal, one in June 2017 and one in October (following the launch). These provided an introduction to the issues raised by gender-based violence, and the importance of its prevention as a core task in development work. They were intended primarily for World Development Committee members and Presbytery agents, and the Committee expresses warm thanks to Christian Aid and Tearfund for their support.
59. The partners highlighted in the 2017 Appeal, Action Entraide and Congo Initiative, are based in the Democratic Republic of Congo,

where a focus on gender justice and the prevention of gender-based violence is at the core of peacebuilding and community development. Two videos were produced, one for general congregational use, and one recommended for adults only. A survey of ministers and World Development Agents is helping to assess the Appeal materials provided, both this year and in general.

60. The Committee again expresses its warm gratitude to the congregations and individuals whose generosity and interest are a constant encouragement, and whose support for the Appeal remains a powerful public witness to the resilient good news of the gospel.
61. The Committee is pleased to report that at the meeting held on Thursday, 8th February 2018, it was able to disburse £400,000 from the 2017 Appeal (£200,000 each to Tearfund and Christian Aid). Between 1st October 2017 and 21st March 2018 a total of £555,233 had been received into the World Development Appeal account. A total of £53,106 in the Special Appeal for East Africa account was divided three ways between Christian Aid, Tearfund, and the Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency of the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan. A total of £3,076 remaining in the Special Appeal for Nepal account was divided three ways between Christian Aid, Tearfund, and the United Mission to Nepal.
62. Three Council for Global Mission partner-initiated projects were also supported with Appeal funding this year. The following grants were agreed:
 - (a) £5,000 to the Protestant Church in Timor (GMIT) for the establishment of a Consumers' Union Mart serving women's groups and families in remote areas (with the expectation that the same amount will be asked for and granted in years 2 and 3 of the project);
 - (b) £2,500 towards the insurance costs of the Tuum Girls' Secondary School Bus;
 - (c) £22,526 to the United Mission to Nepal for the Terai Flood Relief Project.
63. During the year, as part of its members' own continuing education, the Committee received reports from both Christian Aid and Tearfund on the importance and use of appropriate amounts of unrestricted funding in sustainable development work.
64. The 2018 Appeal will continue to develop the theme outlined above, with a focus on partners working in Brazil. Plans for a communications trip are underway, and the Committee expects to be able to meet with both women's and men's groups who are addressing the need to prevent gender-based violence from their different perspectives and social locations. The launch of the 2018 Appeal has been scheduled for Tuesday, 23rd October at 12.30pm, following a meeting of the Council for Global Mission.

65. The Committee is grateful for the continuing prayers of the wider church, and remains energetically and proactively committed to the work entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

KATHERINE MEYER, Convener

PERSONNEL PANEL

66. Members of the Global Mission Council's Personnel Panel contribute professional knowledge and experience to the Panel's in-depth discussions and provide advice on matters relating to Human Resources and Member Care for global mission workers under the care of the Council. All significant issues requiring decision-making are referred to the Council and its Assembly Committees. The Panel met twice since the General Assembly 2017 and reports as follows:
67. **Global Mission Workers:** The Panel gives thanks to God for the Global Mission Workers (GMWs) who, as co-workers with God in His Kingdom, are serving in 11 countries around the world, and for those who have passed on from this world's service.
68. Details together with the varied roles and locations for those who are currently serving with the Council are found in Appendix B. This appendix also highlights 14 global mission partners with whom GMWs serve as co-workers in many roles of mission and outreach.
69. Under the Integrate programme (more than two years) of service, Chris and Rachel Humphries (together with Ezra) who are members of Tartaraghan, were interviewed and accepted as candidates for service in Portugal pending the outcome of medical assessment. At the time of writing, Calls were still to be presented and a commissioning date set by Presbytery. The Humphries will join with Comunidade Pedras Vivas in church planting/outreach roles. During the latter part of 2018 they will be involved in preparation before their departure to Porto.
70. The Panel also conducted interviews for a new sphere of service for GMWs Volker and JinHyeog Glissmann who, having completed 8 years of service in Malawi, have been called to serve with the Theological Education Extension College (TEEC) located in Johannesburg, South Africa. Volker and JinHyeog together with their children Lina, Micha, and Lukas will make the transition to this new role, location, and culture during the latter part of 2018. At the time of writing, Calls had still to be presented by presbytery and a commissioning date set by presbytery.
71. Consideration was given to a request from the Council for Training in Ministry to collaborate in the support of Steve and Rosie Kennedy (together with Julia and Lucy) to serve in Romania for three months during the summer of 2018. This opportunity is in response to an invitation from the Hungarian Reformed Church in Transylvania for

Steve, currently training as a Licentiate Assistant within PCI, to provide leadership for their outreach activities. Panel members were pleased to be able to approve this joint training initiative.

72. The Panel received the findings of a report from the Torre del Mar Task Group concerning the Mission Church Project in Torre del Mar, noting in particular the implications pastorally for GMW Steve Anderson as his role there as leader/pastor comes to an end following the Spanish Evangelical Church's decision to end the project on the agreed date of 30th June 2018. The Panel recommended and agreed a reasonable period of time to allow Steve to pack up, say farewell, and to be involved in a final home assignment.
73. Memorial minutes recording sympathies expressed in respect of the following former missionaries were recorded by the Panel: Rev Robert Nelson Stewart served in India 1953-59 – died 12th November 2016; Rev Dr David Lapsley served in Jamaica 1963-71 – died 14th May 2017; Dr Thomas John (Jack) Thompson served in Malawi 1970-83 – died 10th August 2017; Dr Patricia (Pat) Hanna served in India 1954-61 – died 4th August 2017; Dr William (Will) Hanna served in India 1953-61 – died 2nd October 2017; Rev Dr Frederick Henry (Harry) Welshman served in Malawi 1973-75 – died 2nd October 2017; Mrs Joan Breeze served in India 1949-51, 1952-53 and 1958-67 – died 27th December 2017.
74. **Human Resources/Personnel and Member Care Development:** The Panel recommended the adoption of four new resources that have been developed and tested as a pilot during 2017. They are:
 - (a) YANG – Young Adults Not Going is a worksheet used in orientation for Global Mission Workers who are leaving young adults behind.
 - (b) 'Explore' is an online 13-week mission training course for those preparing for cross-cultural mission service. It allows Global Mission Candidates to dig deeper into the areas covered during the Council's pre-departure orientation.
 - (c) 'Self-Care Assessment Tool' is for caregivers, for those working overseas, and in ministry. The worksheet is suggestive and flexible and aids self-assessment in the balance of work and life and in relationships.
 - (d) 'From Apprehensive to Quietly Confident' is an online course to help those returning 'home' to learn about reverse culture shock, transition, and how to leave well from their overseas location. This course reminds Global Mission Workers about the areas covered in the Council's pre-departure orientation many years before.
75. The Panel received a progress report following HealthLink360's decision to withdraw their services from Northern Ireland, regarding the closure of InterHealth in London, and approved two recommendations:

- (a) The Council should continue to relate/employ the services of HealthLink360 for all new applications/candidate screening and for Global Mission Workers on final home assignment for a final medical and personal review. This will require travel to and from Scotland and associated costs.
- (b) The Panel will continue to undertake appropriate research and information gathering to explore how best to provide Global Mission Workers with regular in-service medical and personal reviews, bringing recommendations to the Council within the next 12 months.

VALERIE CLARKE, Convener

GLOBAL MISSION PARTNERSHIP PANEL

- 76. The Global Mission Partnership Panel was newly established by the Council for Global Mission in 2017. It reports directly to the Council in the following areas: the norms or principles of engagement in global mission partnerships; policy and strategy including overseas visits and visitors by partners to Ireland; grants for global mission partnership projects; maintenance of a database of global mission partnerships; ensuring PCI's mission engagement through global partnerships is adequately reflected in PCI publications and website; and providing advice and support on partnership matters for other mission councils and the wider church.
- 77. The Relationships with other Denominations Task Group of the General Council presented a report to the General Assembly 2017 entitled *Principles of Partnership in Global Mission* dealing with PCI's relationships with churches, agencies and institutions in the overseas context. It states, "Where these relationships lead at some point to the placement of PCI mission personnel and/or the provision of funding, the relationship is normally referred to as a global mission partnership."
- 78. Given this definition, the Panel recognises that there is a degree of flexibility in partnering and that relationships ebb and flow. There may be a period of time when it will be appropriate to designate a relationship as a 'global mission partnership' and other times when we speak of a past partnership.
- 79. The Board of Mission Overseas Supplementary Report to the General Assembly in 2014 stated that "... while it is good and characteristic of a denominational mission board that there is a spread of partnerships, there is a danger that in trying to sustain too many, the result is shallow relationships and very little achieved. As BMO looks to the future, the challenge is to be able to embrace PCI's global family whilst giving fresh focus to a selected number over the period 2015-2020."

80. With this in mind, one of the first tasks of the Panel was to review the 22 partners identified in the 2014 paper as well as an additional five partners that had been added in the intervening three years.
81. Considering each partner, the Panel first identified the type of partnership, often finding the partner fell into more than one of the following categories: Church planting/evangelism; Leadership development; Sustainable development (including Education and Medical work); Voice for the marginalised; Suffering/persecuted church; Peace-building; Specialist Services Agency; Historical.
82. Using the Criteria for partnership as set out in the 2014 report the Panel looked at five areas in the partnership: Need of the partner for support from PCI; Compatibility; Dependency; Opportunities for development; Reciprocity.
83. Having reviewed carefully all 27 partners, the Panel recommended that the following eleven be given particular focus between now and 2020, for the reasons outlined:
- (a) **Europe**
- (i) *Evangelical Reformed Church of Latvia (including the Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary), Latvia*
The seminary supports leadership development and the Church in church planting/evangelism.
- (ii) *Faculté Jean Calvin, France*
This seminary is strategic in leadership development in the Reformed faith in France and in Francophile Africa.
- (iii) *Grupos Biblicos Unidos, Spain*
This organisation supports young men and women to be Christian leaders and to be involved in discipleship and outreach amongst universities and colleges in Spain.
- (b) **Middle East**
- (i) *Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary, Jordan*
This work is vital in developing Christian leaders in the Middle East.
- (ii) *National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (including the Near East School of Theology), Lebanon and Syria*
In the midst of conflict in the region this partner is focused on developing leaders in the Middle East and is supporting emergency relief work and education amongst Syrian refugees.
- (c) **Africa**
- (i) *Presbyterian Church of South Sudan (including Giffen Institute of Theology, the Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency, and Nile Theological College)*

This has been a longstanding partnership. Given the four years of civil war the church needs PCI's support, especially in leadership development, sustainable development, supporting the suffering church, and peace building.

- (ii) *Church of Central Africa Presbyterian – all Synods in Malawi (3) and Zambia (1)*

Partnership with CCAP has been in place since 1958. There is ongoing need for support with opportunities for evangelism, leadership and sustainable development.

(d) **Asia**

- (i) *Christian Church of Sumba, Indonesia*

There are opportunities here for leadership development and sustainable development in a church that is in need of support.

- (ii) *Evangelical Christian Church of Timor, Indonesia*

As with the Christian Church of Sumba PCI's support is needed particularly in the area of leadership and sustainable development.

- (iii) *Church of North India, including Gujarat Diocese*

The Church of North India has been a longstanding Global Mission Partner. PCI's support is still needed in leadership development and as an international voice for the persecuted church in a country where Christianity is in the minority.

- (iv) *United Mission to Nepal*

This is a longstanding partnership in a country where Christians are in the minority. The United Mission to Nepal is involved in sustainable development, leadership development, peace building and as a voice for the marginalised.

84. **Summary of review:** All current partnerships are valued but the review identified the above eleven partners as those which the Council, through the work of its committees and panels, may wish to give particular focus until 2020. The Panel recognises that there is a need for regular review in this area, being ever mindful of the limited resources and the General Assembly's priority to develop gospel-centred partnerships and to contribute to the development of reformed witness.
85. A review of this nature has meant that the Panel is better able to provide input into Council decisions from a partnership perspective (e.g. in the deployment of global mission workers). A list of current global mission partners is included in Appendix C.
86. **New Partnerships:** In the course of the year the Global Mission Council agreed on a procedure and application process for considering new partnerships to the Council.

87. **Grants 2018:** In the course of the year the Global Mission Council approved grants for partner projects totalling £43,100 covering sixteen global mission partners in ten countries. It was further agreed that £2,000 of each annual budget be set aside for small grants of up to £1,000, along with a procedure for their allocation.
88. **Global Mission Partnerships (Specialist Service Agencies):** In the General Assembly report of 2009 the Outreach Ministries Committee identified Specialist Services Agencies (SSAs) engaged strategically in four key areas namely Bible translation, Bible printing/distribution, Radio ministry and Satellite television ministry. The agencies/societies identified as SSAs were the Bible Society of Northern Ireland and the National Bible Society of Ireland, Wycliffe Bible Translators, FEBA Radio and SAT 7. Each of these SSAs receives a small grant annually from United Appeal funding and therefore comes under the definition 'global mission partner (SSA)'.
89. **Development Partners:** PCI also partners with two agencies specialising in emergency relief and development, namely Tearfund and Christian Aid, both receiving funding through the World Development Appeal. These are normally described simply as PCI's Development Partners.
90. In PCI we have other relationships with churches, institutions and agencies around the world that do not fit within the above definition of global mission partner. Some of these relationships previously received PCI global mission workers and/or received funding from United Appeal but no longer do so, although there may be ongoing correspondence and congregational ties. By the General Assembly's definition, however, they should not be referred to as global mission partners and at an appropriate time at the discretion of the Council, will be re-designated as past partners and the PCI website should be amended accordingly.
91. **Visits and visitors:** The panel will be reviewing the policy and strategy on visits to and from partners taking into account the desire to strengthen partnerships and the need for member care for PCI's global mission workers.
92. Visits to global mission partners already made or in the planning since the General Assembly of 2017, and some of which may have already been referenced in the reports of other committees and panels:
- Rev Dr Peter McDowell to Myanmar to meet with the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar, 9th-20th July 2017.
 - The Moderator, Rt Rev Dr Noble McNeely and his wife, Florence, to Zambia to visit with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Zambia Synod, from 24th July to 4th August 2017.
 - Rev Uel Marrs to Malawi to meet with the Malawi Synods of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, 31 July to 10 August and Kenya to meet with leadership of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, 11th-16th August 2017.

- Rev David Steele to Malawi to meet with the Malawi Synods of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, from 31st July to 9th August 2017.
 - Rev James Burnett, to attend the Biennial Assembly of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Blantyre Synod, 24th-27th August 2017.
 - Rev John Faris to India, to attend the 16th Ordinary Meeting of the Church of North India, New Delhi, and to visit Gujarat Diocese, from 27th September to 12th October 2017.
 - Rev Dr Peter McDowell to Hungary, to meet with the International Relations Officer of the Hungarian Reformed Church and to visit Pápa Reformed Theological Seminary, 11th-15th October 2017.
 - Prof Gordon Campbell to France, to teach at the Faculté Jean Calvin, Aix-en-Provence, 7th-15th January 2018.
 - Rev Uel Marrs, Mrs Elma Leeburn (PW President), Mrs Pauline Kennedy (Women's Ministry and PW Development Officer) and Mr Ian Leeburn to Lebanon, to meet with the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon and other mission partners from 12th to 20th January 2018.
 - Miss Helen Johnston to Zambia, on a pastoral visit to Diane Cusick and Cody and Suni Dowds, and to meet with leadership of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Zambia Synod, 21st-28th February 2018.
 - Miss Helen Johnston and Miss Valerie Clarke to Spain, to attend a European Member Care Consultation in Malaga, 12th-15th March 2018.
 - Prof Gordon Campbell to Latvia, to teach at the Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary, Riga, 10th-17th March 2018.
 - Rev Richard Kerr to attend the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon International Partners' Consultation, Beirut, Lebanon, 11th-21st April 2018.
 - Rev Dr Liz Hughes and Rev Uel Marrs to visit the Torre del Mar Mission Church Project, 26th-28th May 2018.
 - Rev Dr Donald Watts to Israel/Palestine to attend the 'Christ at the Checkpoint Conference', Bethlehem Bible College, from 27th May to 2nd June 2018.
 - Rev Dr Ian and Pat Hart to Myanmar to teach at Tahan Theological College, Presbyterian Church of Myanmar, June-August 2018.
93. The following overseas visitor was hosted:
- Mr Paul Kawale, Leader in Training at Edinburgh University studying for a Ph.D. in Global Health, visited Belfast from 15th to 16th March 2018.

HEATHER CLEMENTS, Convener

BUSINESS AND FINANCE PANEL

94. The Business and Finance Panel met on four occasions in the past year and reports as follows:
95. **Vision Building and Priorities:** The Business and Finance Panel ensures that strategic planning and co-ordination of the work of the Council is taken forward. In this respect, at the request of the Council, the Panel has overseen the completion of Priorities Reference Panel questionnaires designed to discover whether the Council is fulfilling its remit as set out in the Code and PCI's overall priorities as agreed at the General Assembly of 2017. The questionnaires have been submitted and at time of writing feedback is awaited. The Council's communications strategy is currently under review and is being taken forward by a Link Task Group with a view to reporting to the General Assembly in 2019.
96. **Finance and Property:** The Council records its deep appreciation for the United Appeal funding received each year that makes possible so much of its work, together with the whole-hearted support and generous grant received annually from Presbyterian Women. Council for Global Mission accounts for the year 2018 indicate a net deficit on the Income and Expenditure Account of £81,783 which is close to the budgeted figure. It is recognised that the fairly constant over-spend each year in the region of £80,000 is not sustainable and will be funded by the sale of property to cover the short to medium term, pending further review. Having been pledged a grant from the United Appeal of £1,050,000 for 2018, the Council is requesting £1,085,000 in its budget for 2019.
97. The Panel ensures the oversight, repair and maintenance of Council for Global Mission properties and after receiving a report on occupancy levels in the Council's properties in Belfast, future needs are currently being explored.
98. **Mission Department Staffing:** The Council is very grateful for the dedicated and faithful service of all Mission Department staff during what has been another busy year. Mission Departmental staff meetings and updates have been held periodically throughout the year.
99. Marjorie Coulter, Administrative Assistant (job share), finished work on 8th September 2017 and Kathryn Anderson returned to this role from maternity leave on 11th September, with Emma Love being confirmed in the other half of this job share post on 19th September 2017.
100. Special thanks are expressed to Rev Dr Peter McDowell, Mission Support Officer (Partnerships) who resigned on 31st December 2017 after two and a half years of service in Assembly Buildings in order to take up the post of Lecturer in Missiology with Practical Theology at Belfast Bible College. This Mission Support Officer (Partnerships) role will be taken up by Miss Philippa (Pip) McCracken who is due to commence work on 9th April 2018. Pip will give 50% of her time to the Council for Global Mission and will have core responsibilities for

taking forward work in relation to the Global Mission Partnership, Leaders in Training, and Global Envisioning Panels, along with dealing with funding applications to Misesan Cara.

101. The Council for Global Mission receives 10 per cent of the time of the Mission Development Officer post and was very grateful for the services of the Rev Dr Mark Welsh, who occupied this role up until his resignation on 31st August 2017. The Council warmly welcomes Mr Neil Harrison who commenced this work on 5th February 2018. In his work for the Global Mission Council, Neil will largely focus on reviewing the place of congregational involvement in PCI's global mission engagement, including the implementation of the Council for Congregational Life and Witnesses' "Go Deep, Go Wide" strategy.
102. **Risk Analysis:** At the request of the Council a Risk Analysis Task Group undertook a risk assessment review in relation to PCI's global mission engagement, identifying and reporting, as requested, on the most significant areas of risk for the Council which fall within the areas of political change, sources of income, and staffing capacity.
103. **World Development Committee Convenership:** At the General Assembly 2018 Rev Dr Katherine Meyer will come to the end of her role as Convener of the World Development Committee, having served for the maximum allotted time of seven years. Katherine was originally appointed as Convener in June 2011 and again when the Committee was reconstituted in January 2015, although prior to this, she was involved as an active member of this Committee since 2009. Katherine combined her solid grasp of development issues with great enthusiasm and commitment to the eradication of global poverty. The Council expresses its deep gratitude to Katherine for her dedication to PCI's engagement in global development work through the World Development Committee, collaboration with PCI's development partners, and to the broader work of the Council.

LIZ HUGHES, Convener

TORRE DEL MAR TASK GROUP

104. The Torre del Mar Task Group met on 8th November and 1st December 2017 to review PCI's involvement with the Torre del Mar Mission Church Project of the Spanish Evangelical Church (SEC). The work had been relaunched in 2014 with the involvement of Steve Anderson, who was appointed as a global mission worker to pastor and disciple the congregation and to develop outreach to the local community.
105. The Task Group considered background information on the history and development of the Torre del Mar Congregation; a detailed report by Steve Anderson covering the congregational profile, activities, partnerships, personal and pastoral perspectives, and challenges of

outreach in the Torre del Mar location; correspondence from the Torre del Mar Church Secretary reflecting on the congregation's relationship with the wider SEC, thanking PCI for sending Steve Anderson and commending Steve for his work; correspondence from the SEC's National Council setting out the aims of the Torre del March Mission Church Project, indicating the factors that ultimately led to their difficult decision to bring the Project to an end.

106. In the prayerful discussions that followed, in which Steve Anderson was invited to share at an appropriate point, the Task Group expressed its concern that the Torre del Mar Congregation, a small fellowship with a committed core of six people, found itself needing to take a close look at its identity and come to decisions about the future in light of the SEC's decision; the Task Group also gave careful consideration to any future involvement by the Council with the Torre del Mar Congregation, should it choose to continue independently of the SEC; and it recognised that the implication of the congregation's closure (subsequently agreed as 30th June 2018) that there would in effect no longer be a level of engagement alongside the SEC that could be described as a global mission partnership.
107. The Task Group concluded at its first meeting that the Costa del Sol is not the right place for PCI to be engaged in a church planting initiative in the foreseeable future and that there would no longer be a role for a PCI global mission worker in Torre del Mar beyond the end of June 2018. Helen Johnston and Peter McDowell travelled to Torre del Mar to communicate this to Steve Anderson and subsequently Steve met with the Task Group at its second meeting.
108. As an important expression of the Council's pastoral commitment to the congregation in the current circumstances, it was agreed that Steve Anderson would remain in Torre del Mar to work out a process of transitioning for those currently attending the congregation and at an appropriate time two representatives of the Council would visit the congregation.
109. The Task Group shared its concern that ongoing and appropriate pastoral care would be made available for Steve Anderson as his work in Torre del Mar came to an end and he too faced a time of transition, and this was conveyed to the Personnel Panel.
110. In reporting to the Council, the Task Group recommended carrying out a root and branch review of the Council's church planting and evangelism strategy in Europe, especially in Spain, over the next two years. In this regard, a set of recommendations was conveyed to the Outreach Ministries Committee that:
 - (a) The Outreach Ministries Committee give consideration to setting up a Church Planting Task Group to conduct a root and branch review of church planting initiatives in Western/Southern Europe (Portugal, Italy and Spain) in the spirit of Luke 14:25-30.

- (b) Robust research and analysis be undertaken to discover the most suitable regions of any country in which to base outreach to local people, including discussion with any existing church planting churches and agencies.
- (c) The importance of collaboration with the Council for Mission in Ireland in the field of church planting, as suggested by the 2017 General Assembly resolution, be highlighted.
- (d) There be a careful review, in consultation with the Global Mission Partnership Panel, of the best models of partnership in regard to church planting in the European context, with consideration given to the place of new collaborative and networking approaches to supporting church-planting initiatives.
- (e) Any engagement by PCI (in Spain or any other country) should focus on reaching out to the national language population.
- (f) A review of the Mission Department's capacity to sustain further church planting initiatives is needed in consultation with the Business & Finance Panel.
- (g) Global mission workers' engagement should be as part of a team which aims to include local people (conversant with language and culture).
- (h) Global mission workers need to focus on learning and fluency in the local language and culture.
- (i) Further exploration of a pastoral support strategy for those serving on church-planting teams be carried out in consultation with the Personnel Panel.
- (j) A tent-making approach to any new church-planting initiative is an important consideration, especially where team ministry is being supported.
- (k) Measureable goals need to be set over a defined period of time in each church-planting initiative.
- (l) Budgeting for the cost of supporting a church planting team comprised of PCI's global mission workers and local workers needs to be undertaken in consultation with the Business & Finance Panel.
- (m) The potential for support in church planting from PCI Congregations needs to be fully explored.

LIZ HUGHES, Convener

APPENDIX A

STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION REPORT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

That the Council for Global Mission, through the Stewardship of Creation Panel, take forward the development of a Biblical position on the causes and effects of climate change and report to the 2017 General Assembly.

1. INTRODUCTION

“The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it” (Ps. 24:1). So why are we so sore on the Lord’s property? According to the Word of God, the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. The second greatest commandment is to love our neighbour as ourselves. How can we say we love God if we treat His earth badly? And if what we do harms our neighbours near or far, should we not stop doing it or at least do it less and less?

The role of this paper is not to determine whether or not climate change is happening. Its purpose is to develop a Biblical position on what a very substantial and significant scientific population believe to be the causes and effects of climate change. The scientific material and the Biblical material will lead us to some principles of stewardship of creation and finally to some practical application of what we can do as a denomination, as churches and as individual members to care for God’s world and to reduce our adverse impact on it.

2. CLIMATE CHANGE: CAUSES AND EFFECTS

The ‘greenhouse effect’ is a natural process which keeps the earth’s temperature high enough for people to live comfortably on the planet. Some of the heat from the sun is absorbed by the earth, re-emitted and then trapped in the earth’s atmosphere by ‘greenhouse gases’ such as carbon dioxide, water vapour and methane acting like a blanket around the earth.

Since the beginning of the industrial age, there has been a dramatic increase in ‘greenhouse gases’ in the atmosphere, trapping more heat and raising the earth’s temperature. According to the International Energy Agency ‘Global greenhouse gas emissions are increasing rapidly.’ (International Energy Agency, World Energy Outlook, Executive Summary 2013).

Many climate scientists believe that the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, gas and oil by industry, for transport and to heat and light our homes is the main cause of this enhanced greenhouse effect. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a United Nations body, has concluded that climate change is occurring as a result of human activity (IPCC 2013 Working Group 1 Approved Summary for Policymakers p.2, 12, www.ipcc.ch) and it predicts temperature

rises of between 1.5C and 4.8C by the end of this century. (IPCC 2013 Working Group 1 Approved Summary for Policymakers p.15, www.ipcc.ch).

According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) the evidence for rapid climate change, largely humanly-induced, in recent times can be demonstrated by the following nine effects:

- (a) Sea level rise: global sea level rose about 17 centimetres (6.7 inches) in the last century. The rate in the first decade or this century, however, is nearly double that of the last century. Several small pacific islands are close to disappearing and other larger countries such as Bangladesh are especially vulnerable as are many coastal cities and communities.
- (b) Global temperature rise: all three major global surface temperature reconstructions show that earth has warmed since 1880. Most of this warming has occurred since the 1970s, with the 20 warmest years having occurred since 1981 and with all 10 of the warmest years occurring in the last 12 years.
- (c) Warming oceans: the oceans have absorbed much of this increased heat, with the top 700 metres (about 2,300 feet) of ocean showing warming of 0.302 degrees Fahrenheit since 1969.
- (d) Shrinking ice sheets: the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets have decreased in mass. Greenland lost 150 to 250 cubic kilometres (36 to 60 cubic miles) of ice per year between 2002 and 2006, while Antarctica lost about 152 cubic kilometres (36 cubic miles) of ice between 2002 and 2005.
- (e) Declining Arctic sea ice: both the extent and thickness of Arctic sea ice has declined rapidly over the last several decades.
- (f) Glacial retreat: glaciers are retreating almost everywhere around the world – including in the Alps, Himalayas, Andes, Rockies, Alaska and Africa.
- (g) Extreme events: the number of record high temperature events has been increasing, while the number of record low temperature events has been decreasing since 1950. There has also been increasing numbers of intense rainfall events. Prolonged droughts in already vulnerable areas, is becoming an increasingly common feature.
- (h) Ocean acidification: since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the acidity of surface ocean waters has increased by about 30 per cent. This increase is the result of humans emitting more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and hence more being absorbed into the oceans. The amount of carbon dioxide absorbed by the upper layer of the oceans is increasing by about two billion tonnes per year.

- (i) Decreased snow cover: satellite observations reveal that the amount of spring snow cover in the Northern Hemisphere has decreased over the past five decades and that the snow is melting earlier. (<http://climate.nasa.gov/evidence>).

There is no doubt that the rich world's extravagant use of oil and gas has a huge effect on the environment. Everyone is affected, but the poor, the old and the young suffer most from pollution, the failure of food production and rising sea levels.

Bob (Robert) White, Professor of Geophysics in the Department of Earth Sciences at the University of Cambridge and a member of Christians in Science says, "It is increasingly clear that our use of oil and gas in the West is driving rapid climate change in the whole world... The effects of more extreme weather events will fall disproportionately on the very young and very old, on the poor and the marginalised in places such as sub-Saharan Africa. One quarter of the planet's population lives in poverty and is extremely vulnerable to changes caused by drought or flooding, to the failure of agricultural crops or to rising sea levels. If we take caring for our global neighbour seriously, we need to consider the impact of our lifestyles on them."

As these effects take place on God's good creation, life in the sea, on the land and in the air is affected including vegetation, animals and humans. Many development agencies are working on climate change because they see its impact on poor communities.

Tearfund's partners in the developing world are reporting changes to their climate. A partner in Mali said, "The climate has changed and the rainy season has become unpredictable. The water levels fall year by year and some kinds of animals and vegetation have disappeared. The future is bleak for farmers." And from Mexico, "We expect the impacts of a changing climate to increase, with a greater area of our country becoming desert, more woods and jungle being lost, torrential rains, hurricanes and greater seasonal instability." (*Tearfund: Climate change Q&A October 2013*).

It isn't just developing countries that are affected. The hurricanes which passed through the Caribbean in September 2017 wrecked not only poor island communities but also large parts of Texas in the USA. In Ireland an agricultural scientist Dr. Ethel White has said, "Agriculture in Ireland is already being detrimentally affected by changing weather patterns, creating difficulties for farmers in 2017 and in recent years."

Not everyone agrees about the causes or effects of climate change and there is not agreement among scientists either. Scientific ideas are always being reviewed and revised. For example a recent study has found that computer modelling used to predict how quickly global average temperatures would rise may have forecast too much warming (published in *Nature Geoscience* September 2017). In addition, while the NASA study referred to earlier states that Antarctica lost about 36 cubic miles of ice between 2002 and 2005 a more recent NASA study

of satellite data published in October 2015 in the *Journal of Glaciology* states "... the Antarctic ice sheet showed a net gain of 112 billion tons of ice a year from 1992 to 2001. That gain slowed to 82 billion tons of ice per year between 2003 and 2008."

It is difficult for lay people to judge between conflicting assessments and interpretations of scientific data. Christians too have different views about not only God's World, but also God's Word. One certainty however is that God does not change nor does His Word. And regardless of the degree of climate change, Christians can be in agreement that the earth belongs to God and if we love Him, we will treat his property with care and respect. In addition, Christians who love God will also love their global neighbours by behaving in ways that will be good for them or at least not do them any harm.

Having looked at what is happening to God's World, we turn now to God's Word which should be our source of faith and practice.

3. BIBLICAL POSITION

The Christian Church in general and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in particular derives its authority from the Bible, the Word of God which from beginning to end, witnesses to God's glorious purposes in creation and redemption. The Biblical narrative is concerned, first, last and throughout, with God's will to bless, renew and perfect creation as a whole.

The Old Testament, in all its diversity, bears witness to the sovereignty of God over all aspects of His good creation, and in particular in the history of Israel, His covenant people. In the New Testament the sovereignty of God finds definitive expression in the Lordship of Jesus Christ, thus giving His new community, the church, the missionary mandate to proclaim this good news to all people in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is the incarnation, and the inaugurator of God's new creation in which redemption, reconciliation, restoration and eternal life is established in triumph over evil's manifold forms.

The Old Testament begins with the most comprehensive context for God's loving purposes, the entire creation in all its wonder, beauty, intricacy and diversity. The first verse of the Bible is one of the most majestic statements ever made: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1)

Humanity is the special recipient of God's blessing (Genesis 1:26; Psalm 8:5) and the first human being is given the name 'Adam' which means 'of the dust' (Genesis 2:7), indicating his kinship with God's good earth as well as God.

While human beings are given the subordinate role of dominion of the earth (Genesis 1:26, 28) this is not to be construed as domination or exploitation but stewardship demonstrated in tending and cultivating what is essentially a divine gift. The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it (Genesis 2:15).

The Hebrew word for care is *shamar* and can be translated as keep, tend, guard, take care of, look after – essentially, the stewardship of creation.

The fall of humanity which ensues (Genesis 3) is contrary to God’s will yet its evil consequences affect every dimension of creation, human and extra-human (Isaiah 24; Hosea 4:1-3).

The unfolding of the biblical narrative involves the mutual involvement of two great realities: divine sovereignty and human responsibility expressed in Psalm 115:16, “The highest heavens belong to the Lord; but the earth he has given to humanity.” In effect, God remains the landlord of the earth while we are the tenants not the owners and therefore ought not to defy God’s commands by doing as we please without regard to the consequences (Leviticus 25:23).

The promises, visions and actions of God to save and renew are therefore articulated in terms of creation as a whole and not just humanity in isolation.

Leviticus 25 is a command for Israel to renew its corporate life by letting the land rest every seventh year (the Sabbath Year) and then having a celebratory year of restoration every fiftieth year (the Year of Jubilee).

Psalms 8, 19, 65, 67, 104 and 148 express the glory of how God ordains and sustains the intricate interactions of humans and the rest of creation to their mutual benefit and blessing.

Job witnesses to the awesomeness of God’s handiwork in the often overwhelming powers of nature’s intriguing features and strange creatures, above and beyond human comprehension or utility.

Hosea 14 and Amos 9 articulate God’s promise to restore human happiness in conjunction with earth’s replenishment.

Isaiah writes with prophetic insight and poetic sensibility in the artistry with which he conveys God’s stupendous visions of comprehensive blessing for humanity as part of a new creation in all its fruitful splendour (Isaiah 35, 55, 65).

In the New Testament, we read of how God’s plan of renewal, restoration and salvation reached its climax in the incarnation. God’s words and works of re-creation were now embodied in divine/human form on the earth. As John put it, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” (John 1:14)

Before Jesus began His ministry, He spent 40 days and nights in the primal purity of the wilderness, in the company of wild animals but unaccompanied by humans.

In his summary of the Old Testament Law, Jesus indicated that loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and loving our neighbour as ourselves are both necessary for entry into the Kingdom of God (Luke 10:25-28). Jesus taught that the responsibilities of God’s people to both God and fellow human beings are continued from the Old Testament era to the New.

Jesus' parables and other teachings about the kingdom of God make use of analogies from nature at large as well as human actions in natural settings. He even refers to Himself as the true or real vine (John 15) and the bright morning star (Revelation 22) a chapter in which He is also called the Lamb.

Paul speaks about 'the whole creation groaning' as it awaits its sure redemption in Jesus: human salvation to be sure, but not without the rest of creation (Romans 8). The apostle opens his letters to the Ephesian and Colossian churches with doxologies to Jesus Christ through whom and for whom creation has been made, kept together and brought to final completion.

John's great vision brings the Biblical witness to a fitting climax in his vision of a new heaven and a new earth in which God dwells with his servants in a setting where human beings, city streets and nature's garden all conjoin (Revelation 21-22).

The Biblical narrative is therefore concerned, first, last and indeed, throughout, with God's will to bless, renew and perfect creation as a whole.

4. PRINCIPLES OF STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION

Given the above Biblical meta-narrative it is therefore incumbent upon the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to consider how we live on the earth and use its resources as well as respond appropriately to whatever threatens the well-being of God's good creation.

The following principles will help to provide a transition from scientific information about climate change in our world today and theological information from God's Word about His view of creation, to practical action for individuals, churches, communities and nations.

- (a) God made the earth and the universe. They continue to be good, very good.
- (b) The earth is still the Lord's and everything in it. If we love him with all our hearts, then we will love and respect His creation too.
- (c) God has given humanity the privilege and responsibility to care for the earth and its resources. He is the Landlord, we are the tenants and are accountable for how we use His property.
- (d) Sin, including selfishness, greed, indifference, sins of both commission and omission have brought untold suffering and sadness to God, to His creation and to His creatures.
- (e) The people of God are His representatives, His image bearers in the world and on the earth. They seek to do what God would do if He were on the earth as they relate to His world including people, animals, plants and planet. They ask, 'what would Jesus do?' They try to love their neighbours both near and far, both present and future by being good stewards of creation now.

- (f) Being a disciple of Jesus means to obey Him in all aspects of discipleship, including prayer, church involvement, evangelism and in care of creation.
- (g) The theology of the end times gives believers the incentive, not to abuse God's world before the end of the age since we are accountable to Him, but to prepare for the new heaven and the new earth by treating it carefully now.

5. CLIMATE CHANGE AND STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION

At the end of the day, it is what we do or don't do that matters. Everything we do has an impact on God's wonderful world. Everything we buy has been made using materials and energy provided by God. So just by living a 'normal lifestyle' in a consumer based society we are automatically responsible to God for the care of His earth. We have an effect on God's creation simply by spending our money, driving our cars, heating our homes, watching our TVs and spending time on our computers and smartphones. We don't have to 'do' anything (more) to affect God's earth, we are already doing it by just living!

But there are many actions we can take to reduce our negative impact on the created order. The very first step must be repentance for abusing and mistreating God's World and all that is in it, for all that we have done and do to feed our greed rather than our need. This will involve prayer, a turning away from sinful, selfish paths to the paths of righteousness and to a change of attitude and behaviour involving everyday lifestyle choices.

This will involve both prayer and care, our words and actions. Our talk must be matched by our walk. Prayer, resolutions and conferences are important; so too are everyday actions, life-style choices and behaviour which is mindful of our global neighbours. As James said, Faith without works is dead.

The following are some suggestions for practical action for churches and members of PCI.

- (a) **Churches**
 - (i) Download a copy for the Environmental Audit of the Congregational Consultation from the PCI website, fill in and see what your congregation can do to reduce the damage to God's creation, reverse the trend of wastefulness and help restore God's wonderful world.
- (b) **Members**
 - (i) Remember it's God's World. Always be aware that the earth is the Lord's and everything in it. That includes people, animals, the soil, plants, everything. Despite climate change, it's still a wonderful world. God takes joy in His creation and His disciples can do so too. So enjoy a regular walk in the great outdoors and thank God for the wonder of His creation.

- (ii) Reduce, reuse, recycle. Do we really need all the ‘stuff’ we have? If we’re finished with it, could it go to a charity shop so that someone else can use it? Recycling a tin can saves 75% of the energy needed to make steel from virgin materials.
- (iii) Transport. Use public transport if feasible; for short journeys walk or cycle if possible. Lobby politicians to promote the development of shared use paths along more roads so that more people can feel safe to walk and cycle. If we must use a car, use it as little as possible and get the most energy efficient one you can afford.
- (iv) Home. Can we reduce our carbon footprint by improving the insulation properties of our homes? Could we turn the heating down several degrees and wear an extra layer of clothes in the home? Switch to a renewable energy provider, use low energy light bulbs. Would it be possible to add some renewable energy source to our homes such as solar or photo-voltaic panels?
- (v) Be a Steward of Creation. Pray for those badly affected by climate change, for governments to work hard to tackle the problem and for all of us to respond by changing our lifestyles. And make sure the prayer leads on to action; prayer and care go together.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Whatever the extent of climate change, God’s Word is clear that:

- (a) This earth belongs to God,
- (b) He has given human beings the privilege and responsibility to use and care for His creation, and
- (c) We must love our neighbours as ourselves by not behaving in ways which harm them, and by behaving in ways which help them and contribute to their well-being.

Now is the time to prepare for Jesus coming again, back down to the earth to complete the work of re-creation. The Good News is that ultimately creation will be reconciled to God in and through the saving power of the cross.

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross (Colossians 1:19-20).

APPENDIX B

GLOBAL MISSION WORKERS

The names, spheres and category of service of PCI's Global Mission Workers are listed below and are to be taken together with the Personnel Panel Report.

INTEGRATE PROGRAMME – service of two or more years

Brazil

Naomi Keefe	2004	Outreach programme, The Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPB), Recife
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Great Britain

Christopher and Nivedita Benjamin	1989	Ministry among Asians in Wembley, London
Edwin and Anne Kibathi	2009	Ministry among East Africans in East London

Italy

Alan and Tracey Johnston	2014	Associate Pastor, Sola Grazia Church, Coram Deo Ministry Church Plant, Mantova
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Kenya

Stephen and Angelina Cowan	1985 1989	Outreach and Development Work, Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), Tuum
Naomi Leremore	1991	Theological Education by Extension, PCEA, Nairobi
Gary and Mary Reid	2000	Outreach and Development Work, PCEA, Olkinyei

Malawi

Volker and JinHyeog Glissmann	2010	Executive Director, Theological Education by Extension in Malawi (TEEM), Zomba
Lyn and Johnny Dowds	2011	Doctor, DGMH, CCAP Livingstonia Synod, Livingstonia

David and Pamela McCullagh	2013	Ministry Coordinator Scripture Union Malawi, Lilongwe
Middle East		
Colin and Marjorie Dickson	2016	Academic Coordinator and Lecturer in Practical Theology Academic Department Assistant Librarian - JETS
Nepal		
Peter and Valerie Lockwood	2012	Programme Advisor United Mission to Nepal (UMN), Kathmandu
Peter and Jayne Fleming	2017	Integral Development Advisor UMN, Kathmandu Teacher, Kathmandu International Study Centre
Portugal		
James and Heather Cochrane	2008	Church Planting – Comunidade Pedras Vivas Christian Presbyterian Church of Portugal (ICPP) in Senhora da Hora, Porto (since 2013)
Romania		
Csaba and Ilona Veres	2001	Co-ordinator – SERVANT Mission of Diakonia Cluj
	1993	Mera Children's Project
Spain		
Steve Anderson	2014	Community Development and Outreach, Torre del Mar, Spanish Evangelical Church, Torre del Mar
Derek and Jane French	2000	Student outreach with Grupos Biblicos Unidos (GBU), Bilbao
Zambia		
Diane Cusick	1995	Early Childhood Development Officer, Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), Zambia Synod (since 2016).

Candidates**Portugal**

Chris and Rachel Humphries	2018	Church planting/outreach Comunidade Pedras Vivas, Senhora da Hora, Porto
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APPENDIX C**Global Mission Partnerships**

PCI is currently engaged in global mission partnership with the following churches, institutions and agencies:

Europe

- The Christian Presbyterian Church of Portugal
- Coram Deo Ministries, Italy
- The Evangelical Reformed Church of Latvia (including the Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary)
- Faculté Jean Calvin, France
- Grupos Biblicos Unidos, Spain
- The Hungarian Reformed Church, in Hungary, Romania, and Ukraine

Africa

- The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Blantyre, Livingstonia, and Nkhoma Synods, Malawi
- Scripture Union, Malawi
- The Student Christian Organisation of Malawi
- Theological Education by Extension Malawi
- The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Zambia Synod
- The Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Kenya
- The Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and Sudan (including the Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency, Nile Theological College, and Giffen Institute of Theology)

Middle East

- Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary
- The National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (Including the Near East School of Theology)

Asia

- The Christian Church of Sumba, Indonesia
- The Evangelical Christian Church of Halmahera, Indonesia
- The Evangelical Christian Church of Timor, Indonesia
- The Church of North India
- The Presbyterian Church of Pakistan (including Gujranwala Theological Seminary)
- United Bible Training Centre, Pakistan
- United Mission to Nepal

Caribbean and Latin America

- The Presbyterian Church of Brazil

RESOLUTIONS

1. The General Assembly commend the Report on Climate Change by the Stewardship of Creation Panel and encourage congregations to consider how its conclusions might challenge lifestyle choices.
2. The General Assembly recognise the rich contribution to PCI of partner churches, agencies and institutions living and working in challenging situations and acknowledge the privilege and mutual benefit of sharing and standing in solidarity together.
3. That the General Assembly give thanks for the gracious and sustained generosity shown by congregations and members of PCI in supporting the World Development Appeal, and commend the 2018 Appeal to all congregations.
4. That the General Assembly acknowledge PCI's commitment to share in the training of key leaders from PCI's global mission partners and encourage PCI's ministry students and ministers to explore sabbatical and other short-term opportunities that might prove envisioning for global mission engagement and a catalyst for congregational global mission involvement.
5. That the General Assembly give thanks to God for the dedicated service of PCI's Global Mission Workers, both overseas and in sharing the story of God's work with the Church at home, and encourage the Council for Global Mission and the Council for Congregational Life and Witness as they collaborate on the 'Go Deep, Go Wide' strategy for developing greater congregational involvement in global mission.
6. That the Report of the Council for Global Mission be received.

COUNCIL FOR MISSION IN IRELAND

Convener: Very Rev Dr FRANK SELLAR

Secretary: Rev DAVID BRUCE

INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Council for Mission in Ireland provides operational management and support to the Home Mission, Irish Mission, Deaconesses and centrally managed mission projects of the Church, including the International Meeting Point, South Belfast Friendship House and Nightlight. It supports the provision of a chaplaincy service in universities and colleges, the healthcare system, the prison service and the armed forces. In addition, the Council seeks to assist the denomination in sharpening its missional focus by developing a strategy for mission across Ireland, and by providing advisory comment to the Linkage Commission and other agencies of the church enabling them to allocate their resources to best effect. Under the revised structures which in 2015 gave birth to the councils, the CMI seeks to partner with colleagues in the Councils for Congregational life and Witness, and in particular, the Council for Global Mission with which it forms the Mission Department.
2. The main focus of the Council's report to the Assembly in 2018 is:
 - (a) **The progress of the Home Mission Review.** This was sent down to 10 presbyteries for comment and, in parallel, a Task Group was formed with the Linkage Commission to examine the technical details of the changes proposed.
 - (b) **The proposal to sell the premises at 10-12 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast (Café Grace).** An amendment to a Council resolution was accepted at the General Assembly in 2017, requiring the Council to examine the possibility of continuing to operate the Chaplaincy centre at no cost to the Church, and to consult with other bodies engaged in student ministry. A Task Group was formed and its report and recommendations are included.
 - (c) **A review of the work of chaplaincy, starting with universities and colleges** (following a review report to the Council in 2015 restricted to Belfast) and extending to other areas of chaplaincy work. These discussions about the purpose, place and priorities of chaplaincy work will form a significant part of the Council's work in the incoming year. The Council's response to a consultation document from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust on generic chaplaincy in healthcare settings highlights some of the

complex issues before the Church in seeking to protect and preserve a presence in public institutions.

- (d) **The Belfast Conference.** The Strategy for Mission Committee has been encouraged by the first phase of work of the Belfast Conference which has heard significant reports from each of the Presbyteries, analysed much of the historic and contemporary statistical data, thought and prayed over an emerging vision for the City and has commenced putting systems in place to assess and support new work. Neil Harrison (Mission Development Officer), having been appointed in January, is helping to facilitate this work.
3. The Council places on record its appreciation for the work of all the staff in the Mission Department, which includes those responsible for Mission in Ireland and Global Mission.

HOME MISSION, IRISH MISSION AND DEACONESS COMMITTEE

Home Mission

Directory of Home and Urban Mission Charges. Linked Congregations (in brackets) are not in the Home Mission. Ministers marked * are called by CMI. (April 2018)

MINISTER	CHARGE
Rev Colin Anderson	(Frankford, Castleblayney), Corvalley and Ervey
Rev Rodney Beacom*	Lisbellaw, Lisnaskea, Maguiresbridge and Newtownbutler
Rev Damien Burke*	Drogheda
Rev Andy Carroll*	Donabate
Rev David Clarke*	Sligo with Boyle (Stated supply)
Rev David Conkey*	Enniscorthy and Wexford
Vacant* (Call issued to Mr Richie Cronin)	Trinity Cork and Aghada
Rev Molly Deatherage*	Ballina, Killala, Ballymote
Rev Nathan Duddy*	Arklow
Rev Al Dunlop *	Howth and Malahide

MINISTER	CHARGE
Rev Daryl Edwards*	Drum, Cootehill and Kilmount
Rev Helen Freeburn*	Galway (Alternating Scheme)
Rev Stewart Glendinning*	Moville, Greenbank, Carndonagh and Malin
Rev William Hayes*	Tullamore and Mountmellick
Rev Knox Jones	(Waterside) and Fahan
Rev Chris Kennedy	Bray (Stated supply)
Rev Vicki Lynch (MCI)	Christ Church, Limerick (Alternating Scheme)
Rev Dr Keith McCrory*	Maynooth
Rev Gary McDowell*	Greystones
Vacant	(Aughnacloy) and Ballymagrane
Rev Jean Mackarel*	Drumkeeran, Killeshandra, Cavan and Bellasis
Rev Colin McKibben	(Convoy, Carnone, Donoughmore) and Alt
Rev Katherine P Meyer*	Sandymount (Alternating Scheme)
Rev Alan Moore	(Cavanaleck) and Aughtentine
Rev Susan Moore	(Kerrykeel, Milford) and Rathmullan
Rev William Montgomery*	Fermoy and Cahir
Rev Mark Proctor*	Naas (pt) with chaplaincy at Tallaght Hospital
Rev Stephen Rea*	Carlow and Athy
Rev David Reid	(Ardstraw) and Douglas
Rev Daniel Reyes Martin*	Kilkenny
Rev Stephen Richmond*	Donegal and Stranorlar
Rev Rodney Thompson	(Badoney, Corrick) and Glenelly
Rev Andrew Watson*	Carrigart and Dunfanaghy (pt)
Vacant	First Bailieborough, Corraneary, (Trinity Bailieborough)

MINISTER	CHARGE
Vacant	Clones, Stonebridge, Ballyhobridge and Newbliss (pt)
Vacant	Corboy and Mullingar
Vacant	Dundalk
Vacant	Inch
Vacant	Irvinestown, Pettigo and Tempo
Vacant	Kells (Under review)
Vacant	(First Monaghan) and Smithborough
URBAN MISSION MINISTERS	
Rev Rodney Cameron*	St Columba's, Lisburn
Rev Mervyn Gibson*	Westbourne
Rev William Harkness*	Great Victoria Street (pt) with additional missional duties
Rev Robert Love*	Taughmonagh
Rev Danny Rankin*	Strand, Belfast
Rev Lachlan Webster*	Craigavon

4. **Boyle:** a resolution concerning the amalgamation of Boyle with Sligo is being brought to the General Assembly by the Linkage Commission (page 227, resolution 5).

IRISH MISSION WORKER AND DEACONESS PANEL

Directory of Irish Mission Workers, and the location of their service (April 2018)

NAME	LOCATION
David Boyd	Adelaide Road, Dublin
Tom Dowling	Kilkenny
Keith Preston	International Meeting Point, Belfast
Philip Whelton	Arklow
William Workman	Athy

Directory of Deaconesses, and the location of their service (April 2018)

NAME	LOCATION
Sonya Anderson	Shore Street, Donaghadee
Eileen Black	First Magherafelt
Rachel Cubitt	Whiteabbey
Eleanor Drysdale	Wellington, Ballymena
Joanne Dunlop	Chaplaincy Team – Antrim and Craigavon Hospitals
Sharon Heron	International Meeting Point and Windsor, Belfast
Roberta Irvine	Greystone Road, Antrim
Phyllis Linton	West Church, Ballymena
Heather McCracken	Chaplaincy Team – Royal Victoria and Belfast City Hospitals
Amy Magee	Without charge
Tracey Nicholl	St James', Ballymoney
Julie Peake	Without charge
Michelle Purdy	Ballyclare
Hazel Reid	First Broughshane

NAME	LOCATION
Margaret Robertson	Elmwood, Lisburn
Rosemary Spiers	Greenwell Street, Newtownards
Evelyn Whyte	1st Lisburn

5. Heidi England (Probationer Deaconess) is currently serving in the Ulster Hospital as Assistant to the Chaplain and, in a similar capacity, with Rev Graham Stockdale (Chaplain, HMP Maghaberry).
6. Three student Deaconesses are completing their first year of training at Union Theological College; Paula Burrows, Louise Davidson and Sylvia Santos Bryce.
7. The Council marked the retirement of the following Deaconesses during the year, and with warm appreciation for their service, commends them to the prayers of the Church. Lynda McFaul, First Carrickfergus, retired 30th June 2017; Sadie McCullough, Whiteabbey, retired 30th June 2017; Jenny Clegg, Ballycrochan, retired 3rd September 2017; Christine Kyle, Ulster Hospital, retired 7th January 2018; Doreen Draffin, Whitehouse/NI Hospice, retired 31st March 2018.

HOME MISSION REVIEW PANEL

8. A report with recommendations from the Panel (which includes comment on the responses sent in by Presbyteries) and the work of the Implementation Task Group is included in Appendix 1. A resolution regarding the future work of the Home Mission Review is appended.

ROY PATTON, Convener

NIGHTLIGHT MANAGEMENT PANEL

9. The work of Nightlight continues, with the valued leadership of Linzie Cobain and Brian Simons (Evangelists).
10. A recent visit to Edinburgh by Linzie Cobain and a small group of volunteers proved valuable as they explored ministry to homeless people, as part of night-time ministry. A wider review of the work of Nightlight is planned for later in the year. The recent involvement of the Minister of Great Victoria Street in support of staff and volunteers in Nightlight is appreciated by the Panel.

DANNY RANKIN, Convener

INTERNATIONAL MEETING POINT MANAGEMENT PANEL

11. This project is strategically positioned to minister to the changing face of Northern Ireland as more people come to the province from all around the world. At its base in 133a Lisburn Road, Belfast, the project hosts large numbers every day and provides food, a place to socialise, English classes, support, a listening ear and witness for Jesus Christ. In addition to this, special events such as a Christmas Dinner, a family trip to Carnfunnock Park and student teachers offering an after school club, are other ways of helping and building relationships with those who visit the project.
12. The work receives wide support throughout the church with many PW groups visiting to provide lunches and congregations giving donations after Harvest Services to be distributed to families.
13. The project continues to grow and this raises challenges about the nature and development of the work in the coming years. In addition, the practical, maintenance and financial aspects of the day-to-day running of the Project are overseen by the Management Panel, which works in partnership with South Belfast Presbytery.
14. The Project team is headed by Keith Preston (Irish Mission Worker) and includes Henry Coulter (Assistant Leader), Sharon Heron (Deaconess) and Jeanette Preston (Domestic Assistant).

PETER LYLE, Convener

SOUTH BELFAST FRIENDSHIP HOUSE MANAGEMENT PANEL

15. The formation of a Management Panel for South Belfast Friendship House coincides with its formal transfer to CMI in January 2018. The Panel includes representation from PW. Financial responsibility for the project has passed from PW to CMI, and this will be reflected in the annual accounts of the CMI from 2018 onwards. The PW maintains a substantial input financially and will continue to make an annual donation to CMI for the work.
16. There are two contracted staff positions in SBFH, with a third position of Project Leader, currently vacant. Notice of the Project Leader vacancy has been circulated to serving Deaconesses. No appointment has been made as yet. If a Deaconess appointment is not made, the post will be advertised on a contractual basis.
17. The Panel records its thanks to Mrs. Elizabeth Matthews (Deaconess, retired) who has served in a temporary part-time capacity in leadership of SBFH through most of 2017. Elizabeth completed her term of service at the end of March 2018.

18. Rev William Harkness was installed as minister in Great Victoria Street Church in December, with additional missional duties in the Sandy Row area. The outreach work of the House has much potential. The links with the local men's hostel and the after-schools work are areas in which further development and restructuring could be of great benefit. On-going links with both Derryvolgie and Belfast Bible College students have been helpful. The House staff, Eunice Moore and Natalie McDowell are to be commended in their work day to day.
19. Friendship House is seen as having a strategic role in the on-going mission in the locality and is commended to the wider Church for prayerful and practical support.

MARK SPRATT, Convener

IAN CARTON, Convener

HEALTHCARE, PRISONS AND FORCES CHAPLAINCY COMMITTEE

Healthcare Chaplaincy

PCI Healthcare Chaplains. (April 2018)

NAME	LOCATION
Rev Lindsay Blair	Altnagelvin Hospital
Rev David Clarke	Sligo University Hospital
Rev Richie Cronin (pending)	Cork University Hospital
Rev David Cupples	South West Acute Hospital, Enniskillen
Rev Tony Davidson	St Luke's; Mullinure and Longstone
Susan Dawson	Coordinating Chaplain, Dublin Hospitals
Rev Molly Deatherage	Mayo General Hospital
Rev Ken Doherty	Mater Hospital, Belfast
Joanne Dunlop (Deaconess Assistant to the Chaplain)	Antrim Area Hospital Craigavon
Rev Helen Freeburn	University Hospital, Galway
Rev John Gilkinson	Antrim Area Hospital, Causeway Hospital (temporary)
Rev David Hagan	Cavan General Hospital

NAME	LOCATION
Rev Norman Harrison (full time)	Royal Group of Hospitals
Rev Keith Hibbert	Altnagelvin Hospital
Rev Brian Hughes (full time)	Belfast City Hospital
Rev Jim Lamont	Letterkenny General Hospital
Rev Vicki Lynch (MCI)	University Hospital, Limerick
Heather McCracken (Deaconess Assistant to the Chaplain)	Royal Group of Hospitals Belfast City Hospital
Rev Keith McIntyre	Daisy Hill Hospital
Rev Stephen McNie	Monaghan General Hospital
Rev Stanley Millen	Dundalk District Hospital (interim)
Rev Jane Nelson	Tyrone County Hospital
Rev Dr Ivan Neish	Whiteabbey Hospital
Rev Leslie Patterson	Lagan Valley Hospital
Rev Owen Patterson	Downe Hospital
Rev Mark Proctor	Tallaght Hospital (Adelaide and Meath)
Rev Mark Russell	Altnagelvin Hospital
Rev Ivan Thompson	Bluestone Psychiatric Unit
Rev Alan Thompson	South Tyrone Hospital
Rev Michael Anderson	Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast
Vacant	Ulster Hospital, Dundonald

20. This directory does not include smaller institutions, specialist or private hospitals and hospices, most of which will have their own arrangements in place with local ministers.
21. It should be noted that in most Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland, Chaplains are employees of the Trust.
22. With some exceptions, in most major hospitals in the Irish Republic, PCI chaplaincies are honorary appointments, typically fulfilled by the local minister.

23. Lagan Valley and Downe Hospitals.
- (a) Steps are being taken by the South Eastern Trust to fill the vacant position.
24. Ulster Hospital, Dundonald.
- (a) Steps are being taken by the South Eastern Trust to fill the vacant position.
- (b) Christine Kyle, Deaconess, retired from her role as Assistant to the Chaplain in January. The Council has recorded its thanks to her for her long service to the Church and especially as Assistant to the Chaplain in the Ulster Hospital over many years, and commends her to the prayers of the Church.
25. Antrim Area Hospital.
- (a) Joanne Dunlop, Deaconess Assistant to the Chaplain is on maternity leave. The Rev John Gilkinson, Chaplain in Antrim and the Causeway, is providing cover.
26. Generic Chaplaincy and the Northern Trust.
- (a) The Northern Health and Social Trust issued a Consultation document on 19th January 2018 entitled, ‘Generic Model of Chaplaincy and Re-alignment of Session and Ministry.’ In response to this, and to meet the deadlines of the consultation process, the CMI and the General Council agreed that a submission be made as to the position of the denomination on this matter. The submission document is included as Appendix 2 to this Report, with an appended resolution.
27. Belfast Trust ‘bank’ chaplains.
- (a) Following advertisement and interviews by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust for additional volunteer chaplains for their ‘bank’, Rev Marlene Taylor has been appointed.

Prisons Chaplaincy

PCI Prisons’ Chaplains (April 2018)

NAME	LOCATION
Rev Graham Stockdale (ft)	HMP Maghaberry (Coordinating Chaplain)
Rev Colin Megaw	Woodland’s Juvenile Justice Centre
Rev Alan Boal	Mountjoy, Dublin
Vacant	Hydebank Wood College (pt)
Vacant	HMP Magilligan

28. Funding Agreement.

- (a) The funding agreement in place between the NIPS and the Church is due for renewal in April each year. At the time of writing, notice of renewal is awaited while budgets are set for government departments in the absence of a Stormont Executive. It seems likely there will be a further reduction in the amount allocated from the department.
- (b) The Rev Rodney Cameron resigned as Presbyterian Chaplain to the Prison Service in January 2018 on accepting a call to parish ministry. Mr Cameron gave sterling service both as a Chaplain and as the Co-coordinating Chaplain, and the Council noted this.
- (c) The post of Presbyterian Chaplain to Maghaberry Prison and as Co-ordinating Chaplain was advertised, and the Rev Graham Stockdale was appointed. He commenced duties on 9th April 2018.

FORCES' CHAPLAINCY PANEL

Commissioned Chaplains within the Armed Forces (April 2018)

NAME	LOCATION
Rev Mark Donald	Army Reserve (part time)
Rev Simon Hamilton	Royal Naval Reserve (part time)
Rev Mark Henderson	Army
Rev Ivan Linton	Army
Rev Graeme McConville	Army
Rev Norman McDowell	Army
Rev Scott Moore	Army Reserve (part time)
Rev Heather Rendell	Army
Rev Dr Paul Swinn	Army
Rev Brent van der Linde	Royal Navy
Rev Dr Philip Wilson	Royal Air Force

Part-Time Chaplains to Youth Organisations sponsored by the Armed Forces

NAME	LOCATION
Rev Kenneth Crowe	Army Cadet Force (commissioned)
Rev Dr Paul Bailie	Army Cadet Force (commissioned)
Rev Joseph Andrews	Air Training Corps
Rev Richard Graham	Air Training Corps
Rev Ivan Neish	Air Training Corps
Rev Jane Nelson	Air Training Corps
Rev Prof. Patton Taylor	Air Training Corps

Part-time Officiating Chaplains to the Military

NAME	LOCATION
Rev Derek Weir	OCM
Rev Prof. Patton Taylor	OCM

29. Pastoral Care of personnel in ROI Forces. The Convener has invited ministers in the Republic to volunteer as named ministers for provision of pastoral care to Presbyterians in the Irish armed forces. To date, two ministers have responded positively and discussions with the Chief Chaplain are ongoing.
30. Moderatorial Visits. The Moderator visited Thiepval Barracks on Monday, 27th November 2017 along with the Convener and the Secretary. There are plans for the Moderator to visit Chaplains based in England in April, including 1 Royal Irish at Terne Hill, near Birmingham, who (with Rev Ivan Linton as their Chaplain) have recently returned from a gruelling tour in Afghanistan and who are currently the Battalion on short-term notice for and emergency deployment.
31. Reception The Committee Convener and the Secretary attended a reception on Monday, 12th February in Tyrone House, Belfast, for a visit by the Rt Rev Tim Thornton, Anglican Bishop to the Armed Forces. Rev Alex Bennet, Deputy Assistant Chaplain General for Northern Ireland, was also present.
32. Trip to Somme Arrangements have been made for a group trip to Ypres and the Somme battle sites from 16th to 22nd April 2018, in particular to visit the graves of serving PCI chaplains who died during the Great War.

33. Forces Chaplains and attendance at Presbytery.
- (a) The question of Chaplains in the Armed Forces as members of Presbytery, but for practical reasons being unable to attend meetings, was referred to the Moderator's Advisory Committee, in respect of their status as Charity Trustees.
 - (b) An overture proposing an amendment to the Code will be put to the Assembly on this matter – (see page 153).
34. Personnel.
- (a) The Rev Simon Hamilton has passed the Admiralty Interview Board and is now training as a Royal Navy Reserve Chaplain.
 - (b) Mr Brent van der Linde, having received and accepted a call from the General Council, was duly ordained and installed as a Chaplain to the Royal Navy at a service in Stormont Church on 28th January 2018. He took up his duties with the Royal Navy in early February and is currently serving at the Royal Marines Training Centre near Exmouth, as he awaits full RN officer training in the late spring.
 - (c) The Rev Scott Moore has been commissioned as an Army Reserve Chaplain.
 - (d) Rev Dr Paul Bailie is now serving as Chaplain with the Army Cadet Force.
 - (e) The Rev Colin Jones has resigned as an Army Chaplain (full time) and is now the minister of Regent St congregation, Newtownards.
 - (f) The Forces Chaplaincy Interview Panel has supported two applications for full-time chaplaincy with the RAF.
 - (g) PCI has five Presbyterian Chaplains to the Air Training Corps and there are vacancies in Bangor, Holywood, Larne, Portadown, and Ballynahinch.
35. Prayer Breakfasts were held as follows: 25th November, Garvagh; 27th January, Ballyclare; 24th February, Bushvale; and 24th March 2018, Ballygilbert.
36. The brief video on Chaplaincy that was produced for Remembrance Sunday was well received and widely used. It will continue to be available (in a slightly adapted format) for use on other appropriate occasions during the coming year.

PATTON TAYLOR, Convener
DONALD PATTON, Convener

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES CHAPLAINCY COMMITTEE

Universities and Colleges Chaplains (April 2018)

NAME	LOCATION
Rev David Gray	Queen's University, Stranmillis and Union Theological Colleges
Rev Cheryl Meban	Ulster University, Jordanstown and Belfast Campuses
Rev John Coulter	Ulster University, Coleraine Campus (part time)
Rev Graeme Orr	Ulster University, Magee Campus (part time)
Rev Julian Hamilton (MCI)	Trinity College, Dublin (part time)
Rev Andrew Watson	Letterkenny Institute of Technology (part time)
Rev Richie Cronin	University College, Cork (part time, pending installation)
Rev Helen Freeburn	University College, Galway (part time)
Rev Vicki Lynch (MCI)	University College, Limerick (part time)
Rev Dr Keith McCrory	National University of Ireland, Maynooth (part time)

Profile, Purpose and Provision of chaplaincy in Universities and Colleges across Ireland.

37. The CMI agreed to the appointment of a Task Group to explore the profile, purpose and provision of Universities and Colleges Chaplaincy.
- (a) The Committee's growing perception that chaplaincy needs to be more than the pastoral care of Presbyterian students has been brought into sharp focus by two recent surveys. One was a 'well-being' survey completed by the School of Social Sciences in Ulster University and conducted across the 2015-6 intake of students. It found that over half of the 739 respondents said they had suffered from at least one mental health disorder. A second survey was conducted by Barna in partnership with 'Christ in Youth', and looked at the faith worries and perceptions of Christianity among Irish youth. Their research showed that one in four is currently going through a crisis of faith; few feel confident about their knowledge of theology, most feel an increasing conflict between progressive values and Christian morality and 55% of the 86%

who declared themselves as Christian said they do not know any adult who talks to them about faith.

- (b) While understanding the necessarily broad definitions of faith in this sample, the survey conclusions are revealing and disturbing for those involved in the spiritual care, nurture and growth of an emerging generation of young Irish adults.
- (c) The task group has met on three occasions; the first was to draw up a *modus operandi* and the second to draft the survey questions to be used with a sample of chaplains, students, staff and members of congregations. An on-line survey on the PCI Young Adults website has yielded about 47 responses, mostly from Belfast, but including a small number from the Republic of Ireland – a significant outcome in itself. An initial analysis of the responses to the on-line survey and of the on-line responses to the semi-structured interviews has identified a number of key findings, which might be best summed up in the need to resource chaplaincy better and to develop the role beyond the pastoral.
 - (i) Local congregations see the chaplain as having a pastoral role yet chaplains receive little, if any, information on new students from local congregations.
 - (ii) Students also suggest that the support from their local congregation during university is negligible.
 - (iii) Just over half of the students who responded thought the chaplain had a very important role; a further 40% thought the chaplain had a moderately important role.
 - (iv) Students perceive the chaplain's role to be primarily (but not exclusively) pastoral but yet many of the Presbyterian students have little contact with the chaplain.
 - (v) Students and staff both comment that the chaplain needs to be more accessible and more visible.
 - (vi) Given that many students are on campus only when they have classes and that many chaplains can only allocate 4-6 hours on the same day each week, there are large numbers of students who never see a chaplain.
 - (vii) Local congregations in the vicinity of the universities and colleges are generally poorly informed about the work of chaplains.
 - (viii) Staff often emphasise the value of the more formal side of the chaplain's role.
 - (ix) Ordination opens doors but it is a doubtful pre-requisite to effective chaplaincy work on campus.

Greater Belfast

- 38. The Universities and Colleges' Chaplaincy Committee also receives reports from panels which were set up during the 2013-4 review of

chaplaincy in greater Belfast, and which help to ensure that chaplaincy in each university campus works more closely with the local churches. One panel works in partnership with the QUB Chaplain and comprises the three neighbouring Presbyterian ministers and a representative from Union College; the other panel works with the Ulster University (UU) Chaplain in Belfast and Jordanstown and a number of ministers and leaders from North Belfast Presbytery. These groups, while very different, are now reasonably well established and have led to increased support for the chaplain and, in some cases, a wider range of Christian activity.

39. The Committee is of the view that it would be beneficial for those groups to come together and begin to look at a strategy for Belfast. The boundary lines between QUB and UU are blurred when it comes to where students live. About one third of the UU students from Jordanstown and Belfast campuses live in the QUB area and there is a steady development of more city centre halls of residence to accommodate the move by UU from Jordanstown to York Street (now scheduled for completion in 2020). The new QUB Chaplain has made good connections with Stranmillis University and Union Colleges but there remains the absence of any provision for the students of Belfast Metropolitan College and the Newtownabbey campus of the North-eastern Regional College.
40. The Committee suggests the needs of these 60,000 students ought to be brought to the attention of the Belfast Conference.
41. All of these strands of work underline the need for the wider church to review its purpose and provision for chaplains in tertiary level education. It is hoped that the outcome of the Review Task Group will help to point the way forward.

THE ELMWOOD AVENUE (CAFÉ GRACE) TASK GROUP

42. The Task Group was formed in response to an amendment to a resolution passed by the General Assembly in 2017, as follows: ‘That... the decision to sell the property at 12 – 14 Elmwood Avenue (Café Grace) be deferred and that a Task Group be set up to consult with other interested student ministries and investigate ways in which it may be retained for ministry purposes at no ongoing cost to the church’ (Minutes of the General Assembly, 2017, p.48).
43. The report of the Task Group is included as Appendix 3.

JOHNSTON LAMBE, Convener

MAUREEN BENNETT, Convener

STRATEGY FOR MISSION COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Urban Mission

44. The Belfast Conference

Neil Harrison (MDO) who will facilitate the work of the Conference attended his first meeting this month. He writes:

- (a) “The Conference agreed in May 2017 that in order to build the momentum of its work, three meetings of the Conference would take place between September and December 2017.
- (b) “The purpose of these meetings, hosted in each Presbytery, would be to gain a fuller understanding of their missional engagement and some of the encouragements and challenges therein. The meetings took place as follows: 29th September 2017 West Kirk (North); 25th October 2017 Mountpottinger (East); 15th November 2017 Windsor (South). At each meeting, the host Presbytery presented their current missional engagement, special areas of mission, encouragements and hindrances to the development of mission, along with recommendations for consideration. This was followed by a discussion and SWOT analysis with the input of all Conference members.
- (c) “On 16th January 2018 in Assembly Buildings, David Bruce tabled a report that summarised the work of the three previous meetings along with relevant statistical analysis using figures across all the Belfast Presbyteries since 1965, showing numbers who have attended one communion per year – as a baseline for broadly committed memberships of congregations. It was decided that the next phase of the work of the Conference should be to build a coherent vision for the future of PCI work in the city.
- (d) “On 28th February 2018, Christoph Ebbinghaus led a process of reflection and discussion with the Conference to help begin discerning a vision for PCI’s future in the city. This was framed around an exercise imagining ‘what could be’ for PCI in Belfast in 2037 – 20 years from now. A further meeting of the Conference was planned for 18th April, sharpening this initial vision-building work, helping to equip the Conference for its foundational purpose of allowing the three Belfast Presbyteries to collaborate together in pioneering new work, advising the Linkage Commission and the CMI with comment at critical points of decision-making, and developing credible sustainable models for Presbyterian mission and ministry in the city, into the future.”

Urban Mission network.

45. A list of potential congregations and Ministers who could participate in an Urban Mission network has been drafted. The Mission Development

officer will progress this. This will start by gathering a small number of PCI ministers/leaders who are involved in urban contexts, to decide whether a network would be helpful, and what it could achieve. It is initially envisaged that this need not involve significant additional resources, but could exist largely as a closed group on social media, primarily for peer-support and information sharing. It should also be noted that a number of the vacancies for which the Council been asked to provide comment to the Linkage Commission are in urban mission situations, including large housing estates. The need for strategic input into this increases.

46. Linkage Commission advisory comment

- (a) The Committee provides advisory comment to the Linkage Commission with respect to Home Mission vacancies (routinely) and other situations on request. In the current year, advice has been given in respect of Trinity Cork and Aghada; Sligo with Boyle; St Columba's, Lisburn; Great Victoria Street; Mullingar and Corboy, and Clones, Stonebridge, Newbliss and Ballyhobridge. CMI representatives have met with a number of Kirk Sessions at the request of the Commission, especially at key moments of their vacancy process. Specific input with ministers and Kirk Sessions from the Mission Development Officer has been required in four congregations following the commencement of new ministries.
- (b) The Council is also occasionally asked to comment on situations where a congregation in augmentation is seeking to create a paid post for mission related work. CMI opinion is sought as to whether, based on missional merit, normal rules regarding the allocation of congregational finances can be set aside in some cases.
- (c) The Committee is conscious that the opinion offered by the Council to the Commission needs to be consistent and coherent and rigorously arrived at.

47. Strategic Discussions

- (a) **Rural Mission.** Following consideration during the year, the Council has agreed to seek approval from the Priorities Reference Panel, and funding from the United Appeal, for the creation of a position of Rural Chaplain. There is a general recognition of a unique spiritual need among the farming community – often including young men, and their families working in isolated locations, and in trying economic times. Other agencies (including Rural Support, and the Ulster Farmers' Union) advocating on behalf of rural communities have encouraged the Church to progress this. The initial intention is that a chaplain be appointed to work in three Presbytery areas, focussing initially on the weekly livestock markets, seeking to build connections with farmers, and helping to make connections with local churches. The fortnightly column in Farmers' Weekly, written by a team of Presbyterian contributors has been warmly received – the columns have been further distributed as part of the PCI blog outputs.

- (b) **Migrants' Ministry.** The Committee has noted comments of the International Meeting Point Management Group, concerning the expiration of the lease at 133A Lisburn Road in 2019, and the need for strategic decisions regarding the continuation of the work in this, or in other, locations in the city.
- (c) **Priorities.** The Committee has completed a basic analysis of the 50 largest towns in Ireland (north and south) by population from the 2011 census; with a recognition of where there is, and is not, Presbyterian witness. This list of major population centres excludes the six major cities of Ireland: Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway, Londonderry and Belfast which are already identified as priorities for mission by the Council. While this list does not form a definitive ranking of missional priorities for our denomination, it may usefully be set alongside our existing priorities to assist the Committee in determining next steps for planting and revitalisation.

Rank	Town	Pop.	Province	County	
1	Waterford	53504	Munster	County Waterford	N
2	Drogheda	38578	Leinster	County Louth	
3	Dundalk	37816	Leinster	County Louth	
4	Swords/Donabate	36924	Leinster	County Dublin	
5	Bray	31872	Leinster	County Wicklow	
6	Ballymena	28717	Ulster	County Antrim	
7	Navan	28559	Leinster	County Meath	N
8	Newtownards	27821	Ulster	County Down	
9	Newry	27433	Ulster	County Down	
10	Carrickfergus	27201	Ulster	County Antrim	
11	Ennis	25360	Munster	County Clare	N
12	Coleraine	25089	Ulster	County L'Derry	
13	Kilkenny	24423	Leinster	County Kilkenny	
14	Tralee	23693	Munster	County Kerry	N
15	Carlow	23030	Leinster	County Carlow	
16	Newbridge	22742	Leinster	County Kildare	N
17	Portadown	22100	Ulster	County Armagh	

Rank	Town	Pop.	Province	County	
18	Portlaoise	22050	Leinster	County Laois	N
19	Balbriggan	21722	Leinster	County Dublin	N
20	Naas	21393	Leinster	County Kildare	
21	Athlone	21349	Leinster	County Westmeath	N
22	Mullingar	20928	Leinster	County Westmeath	
23	Celbridge	20288	Leinster	County Kildare	N
24	Wexford	20188	Leinster	County Wexford	
25	Antrim	20001	Ulster	County Antrim	
26	Omagh	19910	Ulster	County Tyrone	
27	Letterkenny	19274	Ulster	County Donegal	
28	Sligo	19199	Connacht	County Sligo	
29	Larne	18228	Ulster	County Antrim	
30	Greystones	18140	Leinster	County Wicklow	
31	Clonmel	17140	Munster	County Tipperary	N
32	Malahide	16550	Leinster	County Dublin	
33	Carrigaline	15770	Munster	County Cork	N
34	Leixlip	15504	Leinster	County Kildare	N
35	Banbridge	14744	Ulster	County Down	
36	Tullamore	14607	Leinster	County Offaly	
37	Armagh	14590	Ulster	County Armagh	
38	Maynooth	14585	Leinster	County Kildare	
39	Killarney	14504	Munster	County Kerry	N
40	Enniskillen	13599	Ulster	County Fermanagh	
41	Strabane	13456	Ulster	County Tyrone	
42	Arklow	13163	Leinster	County Wicklow	
43	Cobh	12800	Munster	County Cork	N
44	Ashbourne	12679	Leinster	County Meath	N

Rank	Town	Pop.	Province	County	
45	Midleton	12496	Munster	County Cork	N
46	Mallow	12496	Munster	County Cork	N
47	Castlebar	12068	Connacht	County Mayo	N
48	Limavady	12043	Ulster	County L'Derry	
49	Holywood	12037	Ulster	County Down	
50	Enniscorthy	11381	Leinster	County Wexford	

MISSION GRANTS PANEL

48. Any applications for grant assistance from the CMI on behalf of local congregations or projects are first assessed by the Mission Grants Panel. Applications for grant assistance, either through the Irish Mission Fund Grant scheme (for evangelistic work), or the Mission Support Grant scheme (for more general project support) should be directed to Philippa McCracken (Mission Support Officer, Partnerships) in the Mission Department, Assembly Buildings. Relevant forms for application are available on request.

KENNY HANNA, Convener

CHURCH PLANTING PANEL

49. The Panel met twice during the year. The Council Secretary chaired these meetings pending the appointment of a convener. The Panel gave opportunity to the Ministers of Donabate and Maynooth to highlight their own perspectives having planted churches. Issues raised included:
- Forming a core group
 - Drawing up a community profile
 - Different models – “island of strength”
 - Funding models
 - Care for the pioneers
 - Timelines – how realistic and useful are they
 - Selection of church planters
 - Regulatory requirements, and necessary changes to the law of the church
 - Membership
 - Appointment of elders

50. The Panel's work continues.

Mission Partnership Forum

51. The Mission Partnership Forum draws membership from the Methodist and Presbyterian churches, including their Home Mission departments.
52. Charities legislation. Of primary concern in this MCI-PCI discussion are the effects and ramifications of Charities Legislation, particularly on the nature of the Alternating Ministry Scheme. As things stand, it seems unlikely that congregations with joint MCI/PCI heritage can register with the Charities Regulatory Authority in the Republic as congregations with joint membership of a parent denomination. It may be that a choice will be required to register as either a PCI or MCI congregation. The Forum is addressing the implications of this for the Alternating Ministry scheme. Any constitutional changes required will be brought to both the Methodist Conference and the General Assembly as appropriate, and in due time.

BEN WALKER, Convener

PROPERTY PANEL

53. Proposed new church building in Maynooth
- (a) In November 2017 the Maynooth congregation gave approval to the revised basic designs and budgets for a new building. Comments on the proposals have been received from Presbytery. Meetings between CMI Property Panel and the Maynooth Project Team to clarify, assist, monitor progress and give guidance, are being held to allow the formal purchase of the proposed site to proceed.
54. Derryvolgie Halls of Residence, Belfast
- (a) The Making Good Defects Certificate has been issued for Year 1 Works (2016) in January 2018. The Practical Completion Certificate has been issued for Year 2 Works (2017) for Refurbishment work to block C and the bungalow in February 2018. Final preparations are being made to allow year 3 Works for Refurbishment work to Blocks A and B to be carried out during summer of 2018.
55. Carndonagh Manse
- (a) Carndonagh Manse is one of some 1200 homes in the Donegal area affected by the serious problem of Mica content in the blockwork walls. The Republic's government is now expected to announce a decision on who specifically will fund remedial works to these defects, during the summer of 2018.

56. Dundalk Presbyterian Church Properties
 - (a) The Congregation in consultation with the CMI Property Panel has considerable work to do to bring their various properties up to current health and safety standards.
57. Carlingford Church
 - (a) The sale of the property is now in the hands of both sets of solicitors to finalise the transfer. Proceeds from the sale will be allocated to capital expenditure, initially in Maynooth.
58. General
 - (a) The Panel continues to address other matters of a property nature including applications for grant assistance towards repairs/improvements to church property throughout the island.

CYRIL CAVAN, Convener

FINANCE PANEL

59. **Disposal of assets.** No assets were sold in 2017 although agreement has been reached for the sale of Carlingford Church for 300,000 euros.
60. **Capital projects.** As has been previously reported the Panel has prepared projections of income and expenditure for the Council's capital programme in line with projects approved at Maynooth and Donabate. A transfer of £400,000 was made in 2016 from the Home Mission account to the Capital account to help facilitate these projects. The project in Maynooth has progressed slowly but steadily. It is likely that a significant additional financial commitment will be required in 2018. The projections prepared reveal a major monetary shortfall and therefore the Council has made additional capital budget provisions in 2018 and 2019. Budgets for 2019 for both revenue and capital have been prepared and will form the basis for the CMI United Appeal application for that period.
61. **Financial results.** Draft Management Accounts for the year to 31st December 2017 have been prepared and received by the Council. The figures reveal a small deficit of some £265,000, which is less than expected but requires some explanation. The Council has been blessed with some unexpected bequests and legacies amounting to almost £155,000.
62. On the expenditure side, property repair grants of £25,290 made are significantly lower than that which was budgeted. This may indicate that congregation properties are not being fully maintained due to insufficient direct resources locally, which is a concern.
63. The Derryvolgie Halls of residence property has not been significantly updated since its original construction some 20 years ago. It is hoped to complete the final phases of the work in the summer of 2018 to bring the building up to current standards. Funding for all of this

work is being partially supported by an increase in accommodation fees to current market rates and from existing resources. It is felt that adequate funding exists to complete the work. Further increases to the accommodation charges in future years will be required to establish a reserve for future refurbishment and maintenance.

64. **Investments.** It is pleasing to note a further substantial rise in the value of CMI investments of approximately £290,000 but it must be remembered that the value of investments can fall as well as rise as indeed they did in 2015 (£219,000)
65. Areas of greater financial concern relate to “Third Party” funding of chaplaincy services in prisons and hospitals. The full effect of this has not yet been fully felt but additional internal funding will need to be sought to maintain services at current levels.

DENIS GUILER, Convener

APPENDIX 1

The Home Mission Review

1. Part 1 of this report is a shortened summary of the main points of the 2017 Review report and its recommendations.
2. Part 2 of this report is the outcomes of the work of a CMI/Linkage Commission Task Group formed to address the practical challenges of implementing the central tenets of the 2017 Review, and incorporating the comments of Presbyteries, after the document was sent down for comment by the General Assembly.

PART 1

3. SHORTENED SUMMARY OF THE REVIEW REPORT, as passed by the General Assembly in 2017, and sent down to 10 Presbyteries for comment.
 - (a) The 2016 General Assembly agreed: That a review of the Home Mission be undertaken on terms agreed by the Council for Mission in Ireland, and that a report with recommendations be brought to the General Assembly, ideally in 2017. (GA Minutes 2016, p.41)
 - (b) The purpose of the Home Mission, as described in the Code (Par 114), is to provide a “more flexible” organisation within the general structures of the Church for missional development. Currently this flexibility is primarily exercised in the appointment process for ministers, who are called by the Council rather than a congregation. Support is largely given in the form of financial grants, with some accompaniment for Home Mission ministers by Council staff.

4. The Review notes that in its current operation the scheme has become static, in that congregations can enter the Home Mission but there are few incentives or encouragements to leave it.
5. This Review proposes that the Home Mission should continue to provide flexibility for missional development in strategic settings, but that the support offered should shift towards offering a range of inputs including:
 - Training
 - Mentoring
 - Networking opportunities
 - Financial grants
6. The Review proposes that the Home Mission becomes a process for congregations rather than a destination. The aim of the process is that, where possible, the life, spiritual health, fruitfulness and long-term stability of congregations will be enhanced and secured.
7. The Review proposes the option of three pathways for congregations beginning this journey:
 - Planting
 - Revitalising
 - Sustaining
8. Entry into the process will be based on clear criteria, with an individually tailored plan for the process being drawn up with the congregation as it commences.
9. The Review anticipates that a congregation will leave the Home Mission scheme when the agreed plan has reached its conclusion.

Review Recommendations

10. To deliver the changes recommended in this Review, adjustments will be needed in the areas outlined below. It is recommended that these matters be examined in detail by a CMI/Linkage Commission Task Group in light of Presbytery comments on the Review as follows, and report to the 2018 General Assembly:
 - (a) **Grants.** That the current provision of grants for capital purchases, property repairs and maintenance, mission support grants for projects and personnel and a number of other smaller provisions be examined and, if necessary, reconfigured.
 - (b) **Council Staffing.** That since the Review envisages an accompaniment of congregations on their pathway with the Home Mission, helping to form their Development Plan and leading to their leaving the scheme, substantial executive staff time must be allocated to this. This change may involve the redrafting of some existing job descriptions or possibly the recruitment of additional executive staff.

- (c) **Property.** That the rules and guidelines surrounding property held by Home Mission congregations be examined and, if necessary, reconfigured.
- (d) **Ministerial calls.** That any revisions to rules and guidelines concerning the conduct of Home Mission vacancies and the issuing of calls be examined and, if necessary, reconfigured.

PART 2

11. Report of the Home Mission Review Panel, following the work of the Home Mission Review Implementation Task Group, and responses from Presbyteries to the GA17 Report.

Introduction

12. The 2017 General Assembly received the Report of the Home Mission Review (see above). This was sent down to ten Presbyteries for comment (each of which has Home or Urban Mission congregations within their bounds).
 - (a) Six Presbyteries submitted responses: Armagh, Ballymena, Dromore, Monaghan, Newry, and East Belfast. The Panel expresses thanks to these Presbyteries. In broad summary, the responses from Presbyteries affirmed the thrust of the Home Mission review as brought to the General Assembly 2017 – recognising the value of moving from a destination to a journey or a process.
 - (b) In parallel to this, a CMI/Linkage Commission Task Group was formed to consider the detail of implementation of the provisions of the Review, including Ministerial Calls, Grants, Property and Council staffing, while taking into account Presbytery responses. The remainder of this Report summarises this work.

Entry to and Exit from the scheme

13. Several Presbyteries referred to this issue: “... the big question arises as to where the balance of power in the decision making process lies, particularly with regard to exit, relating to the respective roles and decision-making influences of the congregation, kirk session, presbytery, CMI and Linkage Commission.” (Monaghan submission).
 - (a) Where is the decision made that conditions have been met to enter or exit the scheme?
 - (b) How are such conditions defined?
 - (c) What happens to congregations which are currently in the Home Mission?
 - (d) What criteria are applied in these decisions?
14. These questions interrogate the relative roles of presbytery, Linkage Commission and Council, with necessary input locally from the kirk session and congregation itself.

15. To summarise the phases of the process as outlined in the 2017 report:
 - (a) Phase one is the initial assessment of existing Home Mission congregations, and the agreement of their pathway. Principles need to be drafted for this and a set of priorities agreed. While the detail of this remains to be agreed, some parameters might include:
 - (i) Home Mission congregations in a linkage with a non-Home Mission congregation may well be low on the list of priorities as it may be assumed under their current arrangements they have adequate support from being with a larger partner in a linkage.
 - (ii) The overall missional priorities as set by the Council for Mission in Ireland at other times might well provide an overlay in analysing the priorities for which congregations proceed to a pathway sooner rather than later.
 - (iii) The specific mission priorities identified by Presbyteries in their Mission Plans of 2009 may provide helpful insights, even if they need to be revised.
 - (iv) It is recognised that with 72 congregations and 36 charges in the existing scheme, not all of this work will be accomplished at once.
 - (b) Phase two is the initial assessment of congregations not previously in the Home Mission, which are referred by the Linkage Commission, or presbytery. At times of transition (such as vacancy) the presbytery and Linkage Commission must have the freedom to consider if the benefits of a Home Mission pathway for a congregation are appropriate for their long-term fruitfulness.
 - (c) Phase three is the detailed mapping of the pathway selected for a given congregation. This process will involve conversations between the kirk session, CMI and the presbytery.
 - (d) Phase four is the period of accompaniment, working through the pathway.
 - (e) Phase five is exit from the scheme.
16. The criteria for exit need to be agreed, and the mechanism for deciding when the exit criteria have been met, needs to be settled.
17. The Panel notes that the transition from the old to the new scheme is going to take some years to accomplish, unless the old scheme is simply abandoned, and every congregation's entry to the scheme considered from first principles. Some congregations currently in the Home Mission depend upon existing grants provision, and upon solid commitments made to continuing support into the future, and under all circumstances, these would need to be honoured.

18. Summary of questions to consider on assessing entry to the scheme:
 - (a) Is the work of the congregation considered to be a missional priority as identified by presbytery?
 - (b) Is the work of the congregation considered to be in an area of high missional priority as identified by the CMI? (Six major cities of Ireland; larger population centres; places where there is no other reformed witness; Euro-route 01 on the eastern seaboard; places where PCI has a historic presence.)
 - (c) Is the congregation in transition, such as vacancy?
 - (d) Is the congregation in a linkage with another congregation which is not in the existing Home Mission?
 - (e) Is the congregation in receipt of grant funding from CMI currently, and/or have such commitments been made?
19. Summary of questions to consider on assessing exit from the scheme:
 - (a) Is the presbytery in agreement that it exit the scheme?
 - (b) Is the kirk session in agreement that it exit the scheme?
 - (c) Has the congregation made measurable and satisfactory progress on its defined pathway on entry to the scheme?
 - (d) Do the leadership and people own a vision for their mission in their setting?
 - (e) Has the leadership developed a coherent sense of the congregation's future, acknowledging the limited capacity of the church centrally to provide long-term financial assistance?
 - (f) Is the financial stability of the congregation secured, with a justifiable degree of subvention from central resources?
20. The Panel recommends regarding the development of principles for entry to and exit from the Home Mission that for a period of years the old and new schemes may run in parallel, but with no new initiatives or admissions to the old scheme being made in this period.
21. Ministerial Calls, including the granting of leave to call, candidate selection, ministers moving within the scheme.
 - (a) The Review Report (2017) notes that any revisions to rules and guidelines concerning the conduct of Home Mission vacancies and the issuing of calls will be examined and if necessary reconfigured. The new scheme assumes that the 'entity' of the Home Mission ceases. This does not mean that the CMI cannot issue ministerial calls – but not under the old rules.
 - (b) Presbyteries reflected concerns that there be clarity on which body issues a call when a vacant congregation is embarking on a Home Mission pathway.
 - (c) Most responses requested clarity on what happens in a church plant (a consistent reference as a priority for the Church) where a planter is called to special work by CMI, and then transitions to become the minister of a newly formed congregation.

- (d) The Panel carefully notes that if it was suggested the old scheme be abandoned and the new scheme phased in on a case-by-case basis, the status of ministers called by the old Home Mission would need to be secured during such a transition.
- (e) The Panel recommends that a new model of ministerial deployment be written, based on the short-to-medium-term needs of a congregation on one of the three identified Home Mission pathways:
 - Planting
 - Revitalising
 - Sustaining

Granting of Leave to call

22. Within the new Home Mission who will Leave to Call be granted to? In the current Home Mission the Call is to CMI and the Minister is inducted into a congregation. This may not be appropriate if congregations are on a Home Mission pathway for a relatively short period. Furthermore, there will be congregations on Home Mission pathways which have already called their own minister.
23. In vacant congregations or projects where there is no kirk session (e.g. a church plant) or a vacant development congregation, leave to call to special work may be granted to CMI.
24. In some situations the Linkage Commission may make entry onto a Home Mission pathway a condition for Leave to Call, either to the congregation or the CMI to special work. CMI advice to the Commission when seeking leave to call would include identification of the Home Mission Pathway the congregation might embark upon and recommendations about the kind of leadership required.
25. In vacant congregations where there are reasonable grounds to suppose the minister will remain in post after the accompaniment period is completed, and where there is a functioning kirk session, the minister may be inducted to the congregation as part of the terms of the original call from CMI, or the minister may be inducted to special work (as outlined above) from which he/she must resign at its completion before being inducted to a charge.

Candidate selection

26. In situations where the CMI issues calls to special work for ministers (or others) for short to medium terms, specifically related to their pathway, and as part of the recruitment process, the Panel recommends the adoption of leadership profiles based on the skills-set and spiritual gifting required for the role.
27. If calls to this special work were to be issued by CMI in this way then the method of selection of suitable candidates should more resemble the

approach taken in contracted positions (without themselves becoming contracts). This in fact already happens in the appointment of ministers to chaplaincy positions.

28. A Personnel Specification document for each position would be drafted, against which an application form would be designed and then compared. This would include essential and desired criteria for the role.
29. An interview process may be followed which more resembles the current Home Mission practice than standard procedure, with a panel that is representative of stakeholders, and led by CMI as the call-issuer.
30. Such calls could be
 - Full-time
 - Part-time/bi-vocational
 - Ordained/non-ordained
 - Time-limited
31. The Council for Training in Ministry may be invited to consider a training option which would specifically equip probationers for service in these short to medium term roles. The Council for Training in Ministry could also consider the provision of specific in-service training opportunities to equip candidates for these roles, either beforehand or 'on the job'.
32. CMI could identify other specialist agencies offering short-term training as part of a contribution to the pathway – such as Forge, ForMission etc.

Ministers moving within the scheme

33. Within the current Home Mission, there is provision for Home Mission Ministers to be moved by CMI to other charges within the Home Mission. This provision is rarely used, but there was general agreement among presbyteries and on the Panel that the provision should be retained for ministers called to special work, if the Home Mission becomes a 'process rather than a destination' with meaningful reviews being conducted. The provisions of the Code recognise the right of a congregation to choose its own minister – even within the constraints of current Home Mission rules.

CMI Grants to Home Mission congregations, and property matters

34. The Review Report (2017) noted that the current provision of grants be examined and, if required, reconfigured:
 - (a) capital purchases;
 - (b) property repairs and maintenance;
 - (c) mission support grants for projects and personnel;
 - (d) other smaller provisions.

35. Several presbyteries called for a more strategic use of the grants facility currently used by CMI.
- (a) **Mission Grants.** The Home Mission review requires a resetting of the parameters and scope of the current CMI grant-making facility for mission purposes. What sort of funding would a congregation on a Home Mission pathway need? This would be heavily influenced by the pathway (plant, sustain, revitalise). Mission grants which might be payable (according to the pathway) could be for training, ministry and mission programmes, salaries and property.
 - (b) Property grants (Repair and Capital) currently administered by the Property Panel for Home Mission congregations would need to be re-purposed, especially for congregations on a short-term pathway.
 - (c) Repair grants could be awarded when a congregation on a Home Mission pathway demonstrated that a property repair was essential to their mission as defined by their pathway and that the costs could not be met in any other way.
 - (d) Capital grants towards the purchase or construction of facilities (buildings for meeting, manses) for church plants would remain available. The allocation of capital funds for purposes outside this would be exceptional.
 - (e) Other Home Mission grants are currently available in Home Mission situations, and include:
 - (i) Small grants for the support of mission projects (less than £5000). This could continue for congregations on a Home Mission pathway.
 - (ii) Home Mission fabric grant. This would be discontinued.
 - (iii) Home Mission Ministers' car loan. This would be discontinued.
36. The Review Report (2017) asked that the rules and guidelines surrounding property held by Home Mission congregations be examined and if necessary reconfigured. (Code Par 300(4-6))
37. As with mission grants, the approach to dealing with Home Mission property would depend on the pathway chosen for a congregation entering the Home Mission.
- (a) The question of title to Home Mission property varies depending on the history of the relationship. In settings where a property was purchased by a Home Mission capital grant, the position of BMI and subsequently CMI has been to transfer title of the property to the local congregation as soon as possible, with the recommendation that the Education Board of Presbytery be appointed as Holding Trustees. However in the past (and usually for local reasons), title is held by the PCI Trustees, or sometimes locally appointed congregational Trustees.

- (b) It is recommended that with the implementation of the Home Mission review the principle of transferring the asset to the local congregation become a policy and that steps be taken in all situations where property is held centrally but in the name of the congregation for this property to be transferred.
 - (c) If assistance were needed for the maintenance of such properties then this would be handled in the normal way through the CMI repair grants system.
38. CMI's involvement in providing support for property would in the future be handled on a partnership basis determined by the needs of the pathway that the congregation was on. For example in the case of a church plant, where few or no resources exist locally for the purchase or even rental of property, the CMI would potentially provide the resource for such provision.
39. The Code currently provides for the payback of capital grants or even repair grants where the property that benefits from these is sold by the congregation within five years. A similar provision would need to be retained so that grant monies can be clawed back if no longer needed for the purpose for which they were given.
40. For congregations already in the Home Mission transferring to a pathway, the Home Mission would honour existing commitments, whether capital or repair grants for property, but over time and as they transfer to a new pathway, reassess the needs for this continuing support.
41. For congregations embarking on a Home Mission pathway, title to property would be held with the congregation, or transferred to it. Grant applications would be assessed on the pathway and the needs at the time.

Council Staffing

42. Since the Review Report (2017) envisages an accompaniment of congregations on their pathway with the Home Mission, helping to form their Development Plan and leading to their leaving the scheme, additional executive staff time must be allocated to this. Can this be achieved with the level of Council staffing currently available? If the review proposals create a body of work that is not deliverable, then this needs to be said now to avoid making commitments which cannot be met.
43. In responding to the question raised in the Report about the need for additional paid staff to manage the accompaniment process, presbytery responses were broadly positive, recognising that additional capacity will be needed. The Panel notes the following:
- (a) One presbytery (Armagh) resisted the employment of additional staff centrally: "Presbytery would also be concerned about the possibility of further executive staff being appointed as a consequence of changes to the scheme. This ought to be resisted and staff reallocated instead."

- (b) The others recognised the need and proposed different solutions. One presbytery proposed a creative solution of using the potential capacity created by the call of part-time ministers to congregations within their bounds.
 - (c) The Panel further notes there is no constitutional restriction to using ministers from neighbouring presbyteries to offer accompaniment within the bounds of another presbytery.
44. The Panel recommends that suitable people are identified, trained and deployed under the direction of the executive staff in the Council to fulfil the accompaniment role. Staff who may have a role include the Mission Development Officer, the Mission Support Officer (partnerships) and the Training Development Officer.
45. Other models may be considered for the process of accompaniment including those in part-time ministry of word and sacrament who may take on such accompaniment as defined additional duties. Once accompaniment begins, progress needs to be evaluated, a report written up, adjustments made and conclusions drawn.

Other Related issues

46. **Alternative models of Church.** Rules in Church Plants more generally need to be re-drafted, as they are based on legislation dating back to Church Extension. In the light of the Council's experience in Maynooth, Donabate and Cliftonville Road, and the further reflections of the CMI Church Planting Panel, the Panel will synthesise this into a coherent set of proposals, and bring overtures to the General Assembly in 2019.
47. **Smaller Churches.** One of the principles the review argued for is that congregational models need to be developed that will allow groups of 20/30/40 people to be established in such a way that they can be a sustainable congregation.
48. The Panel notes the valuable work being done by the CCLW on small and fruitful congregations. It is recognised that entirely different models of gathering as the people of God will be required if such small churches are to survive and grow. Matters to consider include:
- (a) Ownership of (and responsibility for) buildings;
 - (b) Financial obligations to the central church through assessments and contributions to stipend;
 - (c) Salaried leadership, other than a minister.
49. **Sustainability.** The need for long-term stability is identified in most of the Presbytery responses, but how this is measured and assessed will be key to the effectiveness of the Home Mission in the future. The Church needs to have confidence that any decisions to release central resources will be made following solid examination of the actual need, and in faith that the blessing of God will follow in his time.

50. **Reviews and Consultations.** One Presbytery noted the potential duplication of review requirements which may include:
- (a) Consultation Review
 - (b) Home Mission Review
 - (c) Reviewable Tenure Review
 - (d) A way of rationalising the content and delivery of these reviews will be helpful if a congregation embarked on this scheme. Initially the Panel affirms the primacy of the Consultation process, and recommends the other reviews be based on the most recent Consultation outcomes as a starting point.

Recommendations

51. That before the introduction of the revised scheme, the principles underpinning entry to and exit from the scheme be further refined, and that for a period of years the old and new schemes run in parallel, but with no new initiatives or admissions to the old scheme being made in this period.
52. That a new model of ministerial deployment within the Home Mission scheme be written, based on the short-to-medium-term needs of a congregation on one of the three identified Home Mission Pathways, Planting; Revitalising; Sustaining, and that this model include approaches to candidate selection.
53. That the CMI and Linkage Commission, as appropriate, consult with the Council for Training in Ministry and the Council for Congregational Life and Witness regarding aspects of this review which may benefit from their comment and future involvement.
54. That suitable people are identified, trained and deployed under the direction of the executive staff in the Council to fulfil the accompaniment role with congregations envisaged in the revised scheme. Existing staff who may have a role include the Mission Development Officer, the Mission Support Officer (Partnerships) and the Training Development Officer.
55. That the Home Mission Review Panel (with additional members as required) continue its work for a further year, and report to the General Assembly in 2019, to include draft proposals and overtures (as required) to reflect the changes proposed.

APPENDIX 2

Submission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to the Northern Health and Social Care Trust in response to the consultation document 'Generic Model of Chaplaincy and Re-alignment of Session and Ministry'.

1. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland welcomes the opportunity afforded by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust to be involved in the consultation process re the operation of generic chaplaincy on Trust sites. The Church appreciates the opportunity afforded the Very Rev Dr Donald Patton, Convener of our Healthcare Prisons and Forces Chaplaincy Committee, to meet with the Executive Director of Nursing and User Experience, Mrs Eileen McAnerney, and others, on Wednesday 24th January, 2018.
2. The General Council of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland considered a report tabled at its meeting on Tuesday, 20th March, 2018, by the Healthcare Prisons and Forces Chaplaincy Committee, and passed unanimously the following resolution -

That the General Council expresses its concern to the Northern Health and Social Care Trust at the proposed formalising of a generic model of chaplaincy across the Trust's sites, and affirms the detailed consultation submission of the Healthcare, Prisons and Forces Chaplaincy Committee to the Trust, outlining the general and specific concerns, as the position of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on this matter.
3. We recognise, and pay tribute to, the professionalism and dedication of so many in caring for those who need the services of the healthcare system. The Church has had a long association with the healthcare system through its chaplaincy ministry and has valued the opportunity to contribute to the holistic care of patients and staff alike.
4. We acknowledge some of the strengths of a generic system outlined in the Trust's consultation document, including:
 - (a) The changes in how patients self-identify, or not, as the case may be.
 - (b) The volume, and, often, rapid turn-over of patients.
 - (c) The positive reception of chaplaincy by patients who completed questionnaires.
 - (d) The opportunity to develop a more consistent working relationship with ward staff.
5. We echo the view expressed by the Heads of the four main denominations in their letter that 'They are not opposed to Generic Chaplaincy per se'...
6. However, we have a number of concerns.
 - (a) The Trust's Consultation paper commits to the embedding of the generic model within the Northern Trust sites. It adduces positive

reasons for doing so. However, the patient survey return of 20%, is a weak basis on which to build such a radical change in the pattern of chaplaincy provision.

- (b) The surveys do not seem to have asked if patients with a denominational attachment would prefer to have a chaplain from their own church background.
- (c) There is no objective comparison of the two systems. Statistics are used to support this change but chaplains know that the method of compiling the statistics is flawed, while recognizing that more patients do not declare a religious preference and affiliation. A more thorough audit needs to be carried out.
- (d) The generic model requires that every patient is seen by a chaplain, but this cannot be achieved within the hours and the number of personnel sustained by the budget allocated by the Trust. The system works currently because the four main Churches provide supplementary chaplaincy personnel at no cost to the Trust – church sisters, ordained Assistants, Deaconesses, and lay volunteers. In effect, the Churches are subsidising an under-resourced service.
- (e) A part-time generic system limits religious care. A protestant chaplain cannot offer sacramental ministry to a Roman Catholic patient. Non-Presbyterian chaplains may not understand the nuances and practices which a patient values. A patient on other floors can ask to see a Presbyterian Chaplain, but this eats into the time the chaplain has on his/her designated floors. We are concerned at the inevitable minimising of the religious aspect of the chaplaincy role and access by patients to the chaplain of their religious affiliation, and we echo the comment of the four main church leaders that ‘...provision must be made for the different understandings there are of the delivery of pastoral liturgical and sacramental ministry.’ Arrangements will need put in place for ministry which can only be properly delivered by a denominational representative.
- (f) There may be an issue with future contracts. When a vacancy occurs, how will the job be advertised? Will it be described and contracted as ‘a generic chaplain’ or as ‘a Presbyterian chaplain working within a generic model’? If the former, then we have a problem.
- (g) Feedback from parish ministers indicates a high degree of dissatisfaction since the generic model was introduced at Antrim. Over the decades, ministers have appreciated the regular flow of information about their parishioners being admitted to hospital, enabling them to visit and to maintain local church and personal contact. There is an expectation by patients this will happen. However, many ministers report they often do not know that a parishioner is in hospital, and they can be embarrassed by the

assumption that they are too busy or just don't bother. The twice repeated statement in the consultation document that 'Many of the patients who declare a denomination no longer require their faith leader to be informed as they have already been informed' is inaccurate. This experience has disrupted and damaged the working relationship, and goodwill, within the local community, contrary to the declared vision of the Trust to partner '...with our community'.

7. The Consultation document also refers to 'Re-alignment of Sessions and Ministry'. There are concerns with proposals around this:
 - (a) The Trust document notes: 'All aspects of healthcare provision are working towards a seven-day service provision and the Chaplaincy service as part of the wider healthcare service will require to consider this aspect in the future.' This would prove impractical for part-time chaplains who are also ministers in local congregations. Will there be enhancement for unsocial hours?
 - (b) The Trust document further notes: 'Chaplains will be required to help out by dealing with urgent requests on other Trust Sites that they may not normally minister on.' Will travel expenses be paid? Will travel time be included as paid work time, given that this would be a requirement of the Trust?
8. We ask that the Trust will give serious consideration to the concerns expressed in this response so we may continue to develop a good working relationship which delivers the optimum religious and spiritual care to patients and staff, and which fosters goodwill and co-operation within the wider community.

Very Rev Dr W. DONALD PATTON, Convener,
Healthcare Prisons and Forces Chaplaincy Committee,
Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Rev DAVID BRUCE, Secretary, Council of Mission in Ireland,
Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

22nd March 2018

APPENDIX 3

Report of the Elmwood Avenue (Café Grace) Task Group

1. The Task Group met five times; on 13 September, 4 October, 13 November, 12 December 2017 and 12 March 2018. The Task Group received verbal and written submissions at its different meetings from:
 - Rev Peter Gamble (proposer of the amendment to the General Assembly resolution in 2017)
 - Rev William Henry (seconder, above)
 - Rev David Montgomery (CUI Ireland, Director)
 - Martin Agnew (CUI Treasurer)
 - Jim Crookes (CUI Vice-chair)
 - Rev Michael Anderson (QUB Chaplaincy Partnership Group)
 - Rev Principal Stafford Carson (UTC)
 - David Small (President, QUB CU)
 - Matthew Burke (QUB CU member)
 - Rachel Gamble (QUB CU member)
 - Dr Barbara McDade (Stranmillis College staff)
 - Rev Barry Forde (Church of Ireland/Methodist Chaplain, QUB)
 - Rev Dave Gray (QUB/Stranmillis/UTC Chaplain)
2. The work of the Task Group
 - (a) The timeline of purchase of the adjoining properties and their refurbishment, including the terms of purchase, restrictions on the use of funds and their sources, including the War Memorial Trust and the QUB Community Trust
 - (b) The cost to the church of disposal and retention, recognising the significant capital sum tied up in the building
 - (c) Estimated market value of the property
 - (d) The terms of the current tenancy agreements in place with three organisations
 - (e) The possibilities of reconfiguring the use of space on all floors
 - (f) The potential benefits and pitfalls of letting the café area to a commercial operator
3. Main points in discussion.
 - (a) Several significant changes have occurred since the original discussions about the future of the Elmwood Avenue property were commenced in 2014/15:
 - (i) The Queen's Students' Union building is now scheduled for demolition, commencing with the ending of several tenancies from June 2018.

- (ii) A new PCI chaplain has been appointed at Queen's, Stranmillis and Union Theological College.
 - (iii) A license agreement has been entered into with CU Ireland, for the use of some rooms within the Elmwood Avenue building.
 - (iv) The proposed move of the UU (Jordanstown) campus into Belfast has been postponed, first by one year, and again by a further year to 2020.
 - (v) Developers in the private sector have been granted planning permission for the construction of privately run student residential facilities, mainly in the area from Shaftsbury Square towards the city centre. An estimated 5,000 accommodation units either has been or will be created by this investment.
 - (vi) Indicators show that student accommodation in the South Belfast area is taken up by students from a wide variety of institutions – not only QUB and Stranmillis, or even those located in the general area. It is estimated that 1/3 of the Ulster University Students attending Jordanstown or Belfast live in the Queen's area.
 - (vii) The case has been well and repeatedly made (including in a recent on-line survey of Presbyterian university students, mostly from the greater Belfast area) that while Derryvolgie is a valued and important PCI presence in the Queen's area, the work of the PCI chaplain needs to extend beyond this residential community of 88 students. The chaplain needs to be accessible to all students.
 - (viii) The increasing secularisation of Northern Irish society will continue to place the church on the margins of discourse in the public square. Retaining a PCI-owned, visible and managed presence on the Queen's campus would be to the benefit of the Church, allowing access to facilities for the use of a wide range of sympathetic organisations, both within PCI and beyond it.
- (b) There remains a significant need for a PCI presence on the campus of UU (Belfast) and the Universities and Colleges Chaplaincy Committee must keep this matter on its agenda, not only to address the day-to-day matters of chaplaincy in the York Street area but the wider ramifications of the close proximity of two third-level campuses within a small geographical area in the City of Belfast.

4. Recommendations

- (a) That the Council directs the Universities and Colleges Chaplaincy Committee to ensure that in its current review of the purposes, profile and provision for chaplaincy in the tertiary education sector:

- (i) the changes in the student context in Belfast, including the move of the Jordanstown Campus to York Street in Belfast and the rapid growth in the provision of private student residence places are kept under constant review for the next five years;
 - (ii) that a coherent vision for student ministry and mission in this setting be developed;
 - (iii) that practical steps to ensure the credible provision of a chaplaincy service on each third level campus are considered and where possible, implemented.
- (b) That the property in Elmwood Avenue (Café Grace) be retained for a period of five years from 2018, and that steps be taken to ensure its financial viability which may include:
- (i) The negotiation or renegotiation of tenancy agreements and licenses to reflect commercial rates.
 - (ii) The investigation and commencement of arrangements, commercial and otherwise, to place the retention of the building on a secure financial footing.
 - (iii) That negotiations with a potential tenant to operate the ground floor as a Café be commenced.
- (c) That consultations with the Presbyterian Chaplain at Queen's University take place at each decision point, to ensure the use of the building for the mission of the church is enhanced rather than hindered by the changes proposed.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report of the Home Mission Review Panel (Appendix 1) be received and its recommendations adopted.
2. That the Submission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (Appendix 2) on the proposed introduction of a generic model of Chaplaincy be noted, and that the Healthcare, Prisons and Forces Chaplaincy Committee be encouraged to respond as appropriate to consultation requests from other Trusts and bodies making similar proposals.
3. That the Report of the Elmwood Avenue (Café Grace) Task Group (Appendix 3) be received, and its recommendations noted pending completion of relevant negotiations with all parties.
4. That the work of PCI chaplains in Healthcare, Prisons, the Forces, Universities and Colleges be commended to the Church for prayer, both privately and at services of worship.

5. Consolidated Resolution:

- (a) That the General Assembly affirm the work of the Council in support of Home Mission congregations and ministers, Irish Mission Workers and Deaconesses.
 - (b) That the General Assembly affirm the valuable work of staff and volunteers in mission projects under the auspices of the Council, including South Belfast Friendship House, Nightlight and the International Meeting Point.
 - (c) That the General Assembly affirm the work of the Strategy for Mission Committee in its proposals for the deployment of a Rural Chaplain, and encourages the work of the Belfast Conference in developing a vision for Presbyterian mission in the City for the future.
6. That the report of the Council for Mission in Ireland be received.

JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Convener: Rev Dr DJ McKELVEY

Secretary: THE CLERK

1. The Judicial Commission met five times in the past year. It received four appeals against decisions of presbyteries. Two of these were deemed not to meet the requirements of the Code to be heard, one was heard in full and one was returned to the presbytery to revisit the decision. Arising out of the appeal that was heard, a Special Commission consisting of some members of the Judicial Commission was appointed to carry out a further investigation and bring in a finding. This Special Commission met six times. Details of all these matters are to be found in the confidential booklet supplied to members of Assembly.
2. The Commission appointed a Task Group to take forward the decision of last year's Assembly to re-publish the Code. The Commission is grateful to the Rev Dr Donald Watts (Clerk Emeritus), who has agreed to convene this Task Group, to Mr Stephen Gowdy (General Assembly Solicitor), for his drafting work and to the Rev Jim Stothers (Deputy Clerk), who acts as Secretary to the Task Group. The Task Group has already made progress in agreeing the method and the outline of how the task will be approached. In addition it has begun work on the early chapters of the Code.
3. The rotation system introduced some five years ago whereby present members opted to resign early in order to create a roll on – roll off system whereby each year one tenth of the Commission is replaced rather than one half every five years. This year completes the change to that system and the Commission wishes to thank those members retiring who have given many years of service to the Commission. They are the Rev Dr Donald Watts, the Rev Mairisine Stanfield, Mr Robin Tweed and Mrs Elizabeth Warden. All of these have served the Commission well – their length of service and their wisdom have assisted the Commission on many occasions. In particular Robin Tweed has acted as the Judicial Chair of the Commission at several hearings over the past five years and Donald Watts in his role as Clerk and Secretary of the Commission, and formerly as its Convener, has had an invaluable input into its work.
4. The Commission pays tribute to the assistance of the General Assembly Solicitor and the staff of the Clerk's Office and the Clerk himself for their guidance in and preparation of its meetings.

The Clerk, the Rev Trevor Gribben writes:

5. This year the Rev Dr Derek McKelvey was also to have resigned his membership of the Commission early, in the final stage of the rotation system outlined in point 3 above. However, for the sake of a degree

of continuity, and having consulted the officers of the Nominations Committee, I asked Dr McKelvey to remain on the Commission as its Convener for one additional year and he kindly agreed to do so. Early in the 2018-19 session I will be asking the Nominations Committee to seek to identify a suitable nominee for Convener of the Judicial Commission, for appointment at the 2019 General Assembly, so that that person may become familiar with the role.

DEREK J MCKELVEY, Convener

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report of the Judicial Commission be received.

SPECIAL JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Convener: Rev Dr DJ McKELVEY

Secretary: THE CLERK

It was not necessary for the Special Commission to meet.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report of the Special Judicial Commission be received.

COMMISSION ON APPLICATIONS

THE CLERK, Convener

It was not necessary for the Commission on Applications to meet.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report of the Commission on Applications be received.

COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL WITNESS

Convener: Rev Dr TJ McCORMICK

Secretary: Mr LINDSAY CONWAY, OBE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **The Council report** addresses the general work of the Council for Social Witness under the headings of: A Time to Celebrate, A Time to Challenge, A Time for Collaboration, A Time to Consider. The report also includes the review and audit of the Strategic Plan 2015-2018.
2. **Disability Services Committee** reports on the day to day operation of the services offered by the numerous facilities. Although occupancy levels are good in the majority of our units, there is still concern over occupancy levels at Lawnfield House. The Kinghan Church Task Group has made an interim report to the Council. The involvement of the Committee in the My Place events has been well received.
3. **Older People Services Committee** had an exceptionally busy year with the relocation of Ard Cluan House and York House to Trinity House. An increase in the levels of dementia care beds has been under constant review. A number of official openings and anniversaries have punctuated the past year.
4. **Taking Care Committee** concluded the work on adult safeguarding with a conference and launch on 15th March. Major changes within Access(NI) and Garda Vetting have been implemented. The safe use of social media within churches is a major ongoing concern. There has been a good uptake of the new kirk session training module.
5. **Specialist Services Committee** continues to oversee the very specialist work within their charge. Staff in all the units have been supported through a number of difficult mental health related situations. Funding levels are a major concern in this whole area of work.

MAIN COUNCIL REPORT

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the sun. Ecclesiastes 3:1

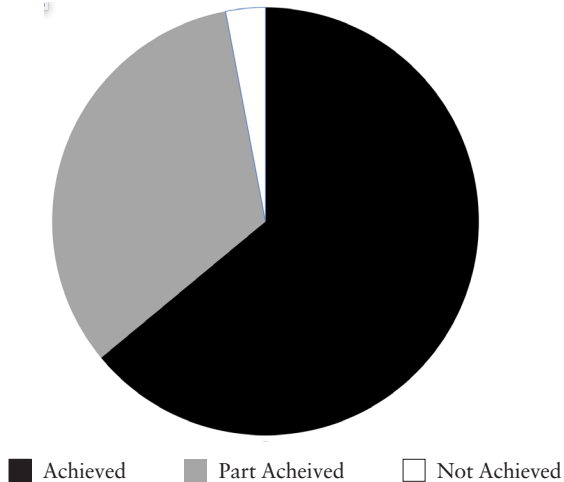
6. The breadth and diversity of the work undertaken by the Council of Social Witness is both a strength and a challenge. The Council continues to provide comprehensive service and care at a time of almost constant change and challenge.

7. **A Time to Celebrate:** The Council celebrated the work and witness of Ard Cluan House since 1977 in Londonderry, and York House in Portrush, opened 1970, prior to the relocation of residents and staff in Trinity House, Garvagh. This provided an opportunity to acknowledge the dedicated work of staff, the help of support groups, the co-operation of relatives and the understanding of residents. These celebrations were a significant stepping-stone on the journey to Trinity House, Garvagh, which was officially opened by the Moderator, Rt Rev Dr Noble McNeely, on 18th December 2017, a further cause for celebration and thanksgiving.
8. Other celebrations included the opening of a dementia garden at Sunnyside House in Bangor and the 25th anniversary of Harold McCauley Nursing Home in Omagh. The long-service of staff and completion of professional training have also been celebrated.
9. It is important to thank two committee conveners and celebrate the contributions they have made to the work of the Council, and previously the Board of Social Witness. Rev Colin Megaw served as Convener of Adult Services Committee from 2009-2014 and Specialist Services since 2015. To this work he brought a wealth of personal experience, an understanding of the complex nature of the work, an ability to relate to statutory bodies and an empathy for those using the services of Carlisle House, Gray's Court, and Thompson House in particular. Colin made the phrase "People Matter to God" a practical reality for many who too often are marginalised and ignored.
10. Rev John Seawright has been Convener of the Older People Services Committee since 2010. His warm and gentle nature has infused the work of this Committee at a time when difficult realities had to be addressed with discernment and determination. John has blended wise stewardship of resources with compassion for individuals in a most effective way. His leadership has been appreciated by committee members, staff in the office and in the various units, as well as residents and their families.
11. A special thanks to Harry Orr, who through the years gave support and advice to Social Witness on a range of building and health and safety issues. Council wish Harry well on his retirement.
12. **A Time of Challenge:** The Council and its Committees have encountered several challenges throughout this year. The anticipated takeover of the Peacehaven Trust in Greystones has not progressed as quickly as hoped. Following the guidance of the General Assembly Solicitor and with the permission of the Trustees, a revised proposal is brought to the General Assembly to enable the Church to continue the work and ministry of this significant project.
13. The Council has risen to the challenge of what is usually referred to as Adult Safeguarding. PCI has been at the forefront of resourcing leaders with regards to safeguarding children and young people, and with the support of members who hold key roles in this sector, the Adult

Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines were launched on 15th March 2018. The impact on congregations remains to be seen.

14. Within the Church, and the wider community, there is a growing awareness of several issues: the needs of those with dementia, and how we can minister to them and their families; the pain of domestic abuse; and the increase in human trafficking. The Council may not have the capacity to address these matters fully but there have been useful presentations at meetings of the Council which have encouraged 'signposting' to helpful resources and other agencies.
15. **A Time for Collaboration:** This year, perhaps more than any other, the Council is conscious that the celebrations have been possible and the challenges faced due to the positive collaboration of others. This was most clearly demonstrated in the opening of Trinity House. Appreciation must be expressed to the Personnel, Finance and IT Departments; and the Clerk and the General Assembly Solicitor for their professional guidance and support. There was also a host of volunteers who 'turned their hand' to anything to ensure that there was a warm and comfortable welcome for residents and staff.
16. In other aspects of the Council's work we have appreciated the support of other Councils and Departments and have continued to benefit from Local Support Committees and 'Friends of' groups.
17. Those statutory, voluntary, community and faith groups which work closely with the Council are now too numerous to mention. Their support and assistance is much appreciated by all our staff, committees and the Council.
18. Cheryl Lamont, Chief Executive of the Probation Board (PBNI) addressed the March meeting of the Council. She is responsible for the leadership, strategic direction and management of PBNI; the organisation's operational and financial performance and the quality of its external relationships. The Secretary, in introducing the Chief Executive, took the opportunity to thank the Probation Board for their support during the refurbishment of Thompson House. Probation and the other members of the Criminal Justice Sector pulled together to enable the work to continue. Cheryl commended the work of Thompson House and valued the other contacts within the Presbyterian Church. The Council was encouraged to explore other work with offenders as a way of reaching into the community.
19. All of this is undergirded by the continuing dedicated work of staff in our facilities and in the Council office. Thanks and congratulations are particularly extended to Mrs Linda Wray who has served the Church and Board/Council for 25 years, and Mr Lindsay Conway who has been in post for 15 years.
20. **A Time to Consider:** The Report to the 2017 General Assembly was structured according to the Council's Strategic Plan 2015-2018. It is now time to consider what progress has been made in achieving the strategic objectives of that plan before preparing a further plan for the next three year period.

Strategic Action Points



21. The Council and Committees reviewed and audited the Strategic Plan 2015-2018. The plan contained 7 substantive Strategic Objectives and 74 individual Action Points – 40 were achieved, 25 part-achieved, 9 not achieved.
22. The Council in launching the Plan acknowledged that, “the Church was returning to its rightful place in being a key player in the provision of services. Welfare Reform and the daily pressure in Health and Social Care Services have brought society to a crossroads.”
23. The crisis within Health and Social Care Services has further deepened during the life of the Strategic Plan, resulting in longer waiting-lists, postponed and cancelled surgical procedures, fewer care packages and flaws in domiciliary care.
24. The absence of a Northern Ireland Executive has added to the crisis. The Council had received reports which indicated that significant changes in legislation have been held up or abandoned as a direct result of no Ministers or Committee structure being in place.
25. For the Council, which has to relate to a range of professional and regulatory bodies and Government Departments, the biggest challenge is the lack of local government. Budgetary confusion impacts this work both in terms of income and expenditure. There is increasing concern that the impact of the present situation is likely to extend into

the medium term with little forward planning or strategic thinking on future needs and resources. Other proposed cuts in funding will further destabilise an already fragile service.

Key: ✓ Fully achieved ○ Part achieved □ Not achieved

Strategic Objective 1

The Council shall deliver an effective Social Care service for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and to the wider community by the provision of residential, nursing, supported housing, respite and day care, and community based programmes.

- ✓ In partnership with appropriate organisations and regulatory bodies, to carry out a comprehensive building survey of all our units.
- By the promotion of volunteering – the Getting on Board volunteering programme and the achievement of Investing in Volunteers standard.
- By responding to the needs of the Social Care and Faith sectors.
- ✓ By supporting those with additional needs.
- ✓ By continuing to challenge and lobby Government in conjunction with Council for Public Affairs.
- ✓ By raising awareness of adult safeguarding/human trafficking/ domestic and sexual violence.
- By engaging with service-users for feedback.

Strategic Objective 2

The Disability Services Committee – will deliver a high standard of day, residential, supported housing and respite care in all of our Units. Oversee the ministry of the Kinghan Church and wider ministry to the deaf. Contribute to the disability, health and wellbeing work of the wider Church in partnership with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness.

- By developing Denegarath House site as a Skills Learning Centre/ Social Enterprise initiative.
- ✓ By expanding the Christmas Cracker respite initiative throughout PCI congregations.
- ✓ By supporting the ongoing ministry of the Kinghan Church.
- By promoting deaf awareness throughout the Church.
- By exploring opportunities to establish outreach to the deaf community.
- By the ongoing development of our ministry with the deaf community.

- ✓ By promoting Lawnfield House as an all-year respite service.
 - By exploring opportunities for development at the Aaron House site.
 - By encouraging the integration of people with additional needs in organisations and congregational life.
- Raise awareness of disability issues throughout PCI including carers/ issues.

Strategic Objective 3

Older People Services Committee – will deliver a high standard of day, residential, nursing and respite care to all our users and campaign and raise awareness on behalf of older people issues and services. Support the development of the pastoral support of those requiring support in their own homes.

- ✓ To continue to consider the relocation of Ard Cluan House and York House.
- To continue to challenge Government Policy in relation to Transforming Your Care, pertaining to older people.
- To explore opportunities to provide Home Care Services.
- ✓ To train all staff and volunteers in dementia awareness and to develop awareness in the wider Church on dementia.
- ✓ To attain an overall occupancy rate of 95%.
- To increase the number of volunteers in the homes to 250.
- ✓ To provide respite/day care/holiday accommodation for an additional 50 residents.
- To establish Activities Coordinators in each of the residential homes.

Strategic Objective 4

Taking Care Committee (The Safeguarding Programme of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland) – creating a safe environment for all our members, users, volunteers and staff.

- ✓ To provide training for those working with or in contact with children and adults at risk.
- ✓ To prepare for Access (NI) applications going online.
- To review current policies and devise relevant responses to safeguarding issues.
- ✓ Organise conferences and seminars in conjunction with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness.
- ✓ To raise awareness of Child Protection issues.
- ✓ To develop a training programme for kirk sessions.
- To appoint a network of Taking Care Ambassadors.

- To develop a Taking Care Sunday strategy.
- ✓ To develop a working relationship with our public protection partners.
- ✓ To develop a safeguarding strategy for adults at risk of harm, who attend our congregations and participate in activities.
- To continue to build relationships with other faith and voluntary groups.
- ✓ To raise awareness of human trafficking and domestic/sexual violence.

Strategic Objective 5

The Specialist Services Committee – will deliver a high standard of service to those with addictions, offending behaviours and who require supported housing.

- Establish a closer collaboration between Thompson House, Carlisle House and Gray's Court.
- ✓ Develop a Crime Reduction and Life Skills Programme for Thompson House.
- ✓ Develop the Fresh Start Programme in partnership with the Northern Ireland Prison Service.
- Develop a link with prison chaplains and contribute to the development of community chaplains.
- Establish stronger links with Juvenile Justice Centre
- ✓ Include work of Flourish! Churches' Initiative on Suicide.
- ✓ Raise awareness of domestic/sexual violence.
- ✓ Explore with Oaklee/Trinity the refurbishment of Carlisle House.

Strategic Objective 6

The Business and Finance Panel – will monitor the financial management, personnel functions, information technology and property management of the Council supported by the Finance and Staffing Commission.

- ✓ To develop policies/procedures and deliver training to staff in all Homes/Units re handling of finances.
- ✓ To continue to enforce strict financial controls.
- To establish more appropriate funding streams with stakeholders.
- ✓ To explore possible savings through group purchasing.
- ✓ To ensure funds from capital projects are appropriately controlled.
- To agree a protocol for the use of money given as a gift or bequest.
- ✓ To ensure that all new work/developments are project-managed.
- To explore other sources of funding and resources for our work.

Strategic Objective 7

The Council shall effectively communicate to its members, the wider Church and community the work, services and achievements of the Council.

- By the use of a vibrant fresh web-site.
- By the production of regular newsheets.
- ✓ By the organising of regular training events, seminars and conferences.
- ✓ By the establishment of a Staff Award Scheme for long-service and training initiatives.
- ✓ By a Recognition Scheme for Social Witness initiatives in congregations and within homes/projects.
- By the generation of regular press statements.
- ✓ By the production of monthly Prayer Alerts and contributions to Prayer for Today on the Presbyterian Church in Ireland web-site.

DISABILITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

26. The Committee continues to be encouraged by the work being done and care provided in Aaron House, Lawnfield House, Willow Brook/Topley Terrace and the Kinghan Church, with positive outcomes being received from RQIA visits and inspections.
27. It was with sadness that the Committee learned of the passing of the very first resident to live in Aaron House. Her family requested her funeral service be held in Aaron House on Wednesday, 15th November, and afterwards expressed their deep appreciation for the way their sister had been “loved, respected and always treated with dignity” during her time in the home. One of the respite service-users also passed away at the end of last year.
28. Occupancy levels in Lawnfield House show an increase of 60 residents during 2017 but this needs to improve further in order to secure the home financially. Lawnfield is a specialised centre for Respite and Short-time Care but also has a small number of permanent residents.
29. The bungalow at Lawnfield, which was used by the volunteers/hosts, has been registered for Domiciliary Care and is now occupied by two brothers. A new cabin has been supplied and installed jointly by CSW and Disabled Christian Fellowship to accommodate the volunteers/hosts. We deeply appreciate the generosity of DSF in this valuable addition to the premises.
30. Willow Brook and Topley Terrace continue to provide a high standard of service, supporting young adults living in their own homes. Mrs Elizabeth Wilson took up post as Manager of Willow Brook on 1st December last year following Mr Alan Tate’s retirement on 30th November.

31. The takeover of Peacehaven Trust has proven to be more complex and slower than expected. A Task Group was established following the Council meeting in November 2017, including the Clerk of Assembly, Financial Secretary and the General Assembly Solicitor, to find a way of resolving the issues involved, in agreement with the Trustees of the General Assembly. On account of the legal difficulties identified the Trustees agreed that instead of pursuing an asset transfer arrangement as originally planned, PCI should now take over the company, Peacehaven Trust Ltd. This way forward has been approved by the General Council.
32. Christmas Cracker enjoyed another successful year, being held in five locations: McQuiston Memorial, Belfast; West Church, Bangor; Hillsborough; New Row, Coleraine; and Lislooney, Armagh. Hillsborough also piloted a Summer Cracker event which proved to be very encouraging. The Committee was given permission by the Council to establish a Task Group to explore the development of this valuable respite resource both throughout the year and in other locations, including a possible summer 'fun day' event.
33. The Kinghan Church continues to provide ministry to the deaf community in Belfast. The Committee is grateful both to Kinghan Church staff for their ongoing work as well as those who have supplied the pulpit during this time of vacancy. The strong link with Windsor has been beneficial and has greatly benefitted both Kinghan and Windsor. A Task Group comprised of members of the Kinghan Church, the Presbytery of South Belfast, the Council for Social Witness and two independent experts, has met on four occasions and has made the following recommendations as a strategy for the way forward:
 - (a) That there is a future for the ministry of the Kinghan Church and see it remaining in its existing premises.
 - (b) That the full and efficient use of the building be explored in conjunction with presbytery and other councils.
 - (c) Kinghan should have a mutually beneficial and meaningful formal connection with a congregation in south Belfast.
 - (d) In this context additional arrangements could be made to enable the members of Kinghan to have a more enhanced involvement in the wider life of PCI and both avail of and participate in additional pastoral care.
 - (e) That our ministry to the wider community would be best served by streaming the Kinghan worship services to individuals in their own homes and local church buildings.
 - (f) That links be renewed with other churches for deaf people and specialist organisations.
34. The Committee is grateful for the opportunity offered to its Convener by the Council for Congregational Life and Witness to give advice and be involved in the My Place events for ministers, leaders and all

members of congregations. These evenings explore ways of including children with special additional needs in worship and children's ministry through a mixture of Bible teaching, insights from parents and practical suggestions from those working in the field of special education.

35. The Committee expressed concern about issues arising from welfare reform and, in particular, universal credit and asked the Council to consider the possible appointment of an intern who could be employed to source available benefits or information and to link in with Congregational Life and Witness in this regard.
36. The Committee received approval from the Council to explore 'supported respite' and the inclusion of other areas of disability, such as ministry to post-19 age group, as part of the forthcoming review of our strategic objectives.
37. The Disability Services Committee appreciates the contribution made by Local Support Committee members and 'Friends of' groups who enhance the work through the provision of activities, outings, fundraising, spiritual input, quality auditing and so on.

PETER DICKINSON, Convener

OLDER PEOPLE SERVICES COMMITTEE

38. The work and witness of Older People Services continues 24/7 365 days a year. Our various homes and residential facilities are managed and staffed for the benefit of our residents and are a significant part of our Presbyterian Church's witness. Alas, it would seem that far too many of the members and even of the ministers of our denomination are not aware of this important service.
39. In 2017 the total number of beds provided by Older People Services was 235, of which 63 were registered dementia beds. Over the year we had a total of 238 residents; 79 of these were privately funded and 159 care managed. At the end of 2017 over 60% of our residents were aged over 85 and this included 5 centenarians. We are glad to have continued to reach our goal of 95% occupancy as our homes are essentially self-funding.
40. 2017 was the first full year where some additional income was derived from a £20 per week top up fee for new residents who availed of en suite accommodation.
41. Our homes are subject to the rules, standards and requirements imposed upon all such facilities, and we can report that the inspection reports made by RQIA (The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority) on our facilities were uniformly positive. All such reports can be found on the Authority's web site (<https://rqia.org.uk>). This provides a most useful resource for those who need to choose a residential home.

42. During the year the Moderator officially opened a dementia garden at Sunnyside House. He also visited River House, and as part of a presbytery tour of the Dublin and Munster Presbytery, Tritonville Close, Mount Tabor and Peacehaven. On 18th December he officially opened Trinity House, our new home in Garvagh. This is a purpose-built and further enhanced 50-bed unit; this includes 16 registered dementia beds. At the time of writing occupancy is steadily increasing and we look forward to a full complement before long.
43. The local community has welcomed our presence and many have been glad to get involved in various ways. The local Presbyterian churches have also been most welcoming and very practically helpful.
44. Ard Cluan and York House were formally closed in October. Shortly before this the Moderator paid a pastoral visit to these much loved homes. In the second week of October a Service of Celebration of Care was held in Ebrington Church, just a few doors from Ard Cluan, and a couple of days later many gathered in York House to remember the years of care and service given there also. These were both very special events of worship and of thanksgiving to God.
45. While some of the staff employed in these homes have now transferred to Garvagh not all have been in a position to do so; but the majority of these have continued to take an interest in the new facility and to visit particular residents there. We wish all of them well in their new positions or in retirement.
46. Over the course of 2017 Council bade farewell to four home managers: Ann Anderson from Corkey House, Sandra Boyd from Ard Cluan, Hazel Walker from York House and Miriam Chambers from River House. Hazel Walker transferred to Trinity House as interim manager and has now retired. We record our thanks to them all for their years of service. We welcomed Rosemary Gilbey and Jayne Bellingham as managers of Corkey and Trinity respectively. At present the manager's post in River House remains to be filled.
47. Our personnel department is kept busy at all times, with the national shortage of nurses placing the process under considerable pressure.
48. We owe so much to our dedicated and caring staff in our homes. All of these continue to receive ongoing training and it is not least on them that our good reputation for care and compassion depends, as does also the maintenance of a Christian ethos in all that we do.
49. At our annual awards ceremony for long service, which was held in Assembly Buildings in December, the choir was provided by Adelaide House and a resident testified to the help and kindness she had received as she first entered residential care and to how much that had helped her to make the transition.
50. At the annual NI Amenity Council Awards in September, River House took first place for the Best Kept Health and Social Care Facility in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust region and in the same region Sunnyside House was runner up.

51. Our annual Older People Services review day was held in Corkey House and afterwards a dementia garden and a tea room in the home were opened.
52. In 2017 Harold McCauley House celebrated its 25th Anniversary. A Family Day was held (and *Anniversary Cookery Books* are still available for purchase) and a very special thanksgiving service took place in the home. At the time of writing we are liaising with statutory bodies regarding flood defences and relevant contingency plans and protocols. The home also has a new car park.
53. “Do not cast me off in time of old age; forsake me not when my strength is spent.” Psalm 71:9 introduces the “Guide to supporting people with dementia in the local church”, a resource that was produced in partnership with the Dementia Services Trust.
54. The Guide systematically sets out the essential information that churches providing pastoral care require to be a dementia friendly church: What is dementia; When someone might have dementia; When someone has been diagnosed; When the person is trying to live the best possible life; When life becomes too hard; When the person must go into care; At the end of life.
55. In December, and in conjunction with the General Council, a round-table discussion was held regarding dementia. This was attended by representatives of statutory and voluntary bodies and was deemed very useful. PCI aspires to be among the first “dementia friendly” denominations. A research student is hoping to provide various resources for us regarding the issue of dementia and spirituality.
56. At its meeting in March the Council for Social Witness passed resolutions to consider the possible provision of Home Care Services and also to seek a still greater congregational awareness of the issues facing older people and their families.
57. The running of all our homes is overseen and facilitated by a dedicated team in Assembly Buildings whose manifest commitment to the work and to its witness to our Lord is a source of great encouragement and inspiration for all who are aware of even a little of the volume of work that they do; they go far beyond the call of “duty,” and we record our thanks to them and wish them God’s richest blessing.

JOHN SEAWRIGHT, Convener

TAKING CARE COMMITTEE

58. The past six months has been a period of change, challenge and transition for Taking Care. As a Committee we seek God’s guidance as to the way forward.
59. The challenge which faced us in 2017 was to provide a service which no longer had a Programme Co-ordinator leading it; this has impacted

on the day to day running of Taking Care and the implementation of our strategic objectives.

60. Deborah Webster, our Taking Care Programme Coordinator for 10 years, resigned in July 2017 to pursue postgraduate research. All aspects of programming had continued to develop under her supervision, especially the introduction of the Accredited Trainers Programme and kirk session training. The Committee acknowledges the high standards she maintained together with her diligence and devotion to her duties. Throughout PCI congregations both north and south she proved a reliable, efficient and trustworthy colleague. We are grateful for all she achieved on our behalf.
61. Despite the position of Temporary Taking Care Programme Coordinator being advertised on two occasions the post remains vacant. A decision taken beyond our Committee is that a permanent post is no longer appropriate due to the development of *Taking Care of All*, which combines the child protection aspect of our work with PCI adult safeguarding. This proposed transition will require different skill sets from the appointee. While decisions have to be made regarding this change, the demands of providing continuing training events at all levels, and advice on a 24 hour basis, has resulted in the Council Secretary needing to devote one day each week to Taking Care in order to bridge the gap.
62. The aforementioned development has impacted on the strategic objectives of Taking Care leaving it difficult to advance them.
63. We are appreciative of the hard work of our administrative staff, Cathy Mullin and her assistant Marjorie Coulter.
64. During 2017 the following have been provided:
 - (a) **Training:**

Foundation training	– 22 sessions
Refresher training	– 98 sessions
Designated Persons training	– 2 sessions
Total of 122 events	

There have been 157 congregations requesting the module on kirk session training which is delivered by either the Designated Person or a member of their session. It is hoped this will increase now that the Charity Commission NI has designated elders as trustees, with the attendant responsibilities this requires.
 - (b) **Garda vetting:** The number of checks totalled 745. This is triple the 2016 figure. The increased numbers have occurred due to the Republic of Ireland introducing a new law in April 2016 which has involved a lot of retrospective vetting.
 - (c) **Access NI:** 1,842 checks have been processed through the Taking Care Office in 2017.
 - (d) **Incidents:** Those requiring action or advice were 45.

65. On a more positive note, the Taking Care of All conference is to be held on Thursday 15th March. This is the first opportunity to provide members of our congregations, whatever roles they perform within the Church family, with an introduction to 'Adult Safeguarding: Prevention, Protection and Partnership'.
66. Human trafficking and domestic/sexual violence are a part of adult safeguarding and together with child protection issues we will continue to have close working relationships with our public protection partners. Our staff have regular contact with other faith and voluntary groups involved in this work.
67. As congregations are made aware of adult safeguarding the volume of work which will be generated is unknown. I would emphasise that Taking Care requires adequate, expert staff to provide a professional service so that we are "Taking Care of All".
68. Joyce McKee, an elder in Hillsborough congregation, was the key note speaker at the conference. She reported that in 2016-17, 6,579 referrals were made to the Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland, where there had been concerns in relation to adult safeguarding. The key principles of adult safeguarding are prevention, protection and partnership.
69. The conference where introduced to the categories of abuse – physical, sexual, financial, institutional, psychological/emotional, human trafficking, modern slavery and domestic abuse.
70. There is a key role for churches in the whole area of partnership, the churches having been part of the discussions from an early stage of discussions.
71. Jill Robinson from Flourish NI spoke on the area of human trafficking, stating that "People are not commodities". Those attending were encouraged to spot the signs – individuals being recruited, deceived, coerced or exploited, with the main areas of concern being the sex trade and forced labour.
72. Flourish NI provide a wide range of services – intensive case work, making a house a home, English classes, advocacy, to name a few.
73. Veronica Gray from Action on Elder Abuse introduced the Conference to a bold definition of elder abuse "a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person." Over 500,000 older people are abused in the United Kingdom each year.
74. In Northern Ireland all abuse is under-reported, the majority of victims are women and are over 70 years of age.
75. The Clerk of the General Assembly, Rev Trevor Gribben, and Joyce McKee officially launched the Policy and Guidelines and the *Taking Care of All* pocket guide.
76. The policy and guidelines will be online as chapter 11 of the *Taking Care Manual*.

SPECIALIST SERVICES COMMITTEE

77. The Specialist Services Committee continues to meet regularly to develop and review its strategies in accordance with Objective 5 of CSW's Strategic Plan 2015-2018. In addition to this, the Committee continues to deliver a high standard of services for those connected with Carlisle House, Thompson House and Gray's Court.
78. **Thompson House** continues to receive a high number of requests for its services from the PBNI. Throughout 2017, the average occupancy levels averaged over 90%. Four critical incidents have occurred in recent months. (1) In November, as staff conducted their regular room checks, they discovered a deceased resident. Investigations concluded that this resident had committed suicide. Staff attended the deceased's funeral and met with family afterwards. (2) In December, a 26-year-old resident assaulted a 69-year-old resident. Staff intervened and were able to assist the older resident. For safety reasons the 26-year-old resident was asked to leave Thompson House. (3) In January two residents assaulted another resident causing minor head injuries to the injured party. Both perpetrators were asked to leave Thompson House as a result of their behaviour. (4) In March a resident attempted suicide. Staff responded, managing to restrain and administer first aid with the assistance of another resident. The resident who had attempted suicide was eventually brought to hospital by the PSNI after two calls for assistance to the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service. It should be stressed that the current protocols in place are working well, but the lack of Ambulance cover and their ability to respond to the incident on 7th March does raise concerns for both resident and staff safety.
79. The staff at Thompson House should be commended for their response and subsequent interventions in dealing with these incidents; all welfare protocols with regard to the incidents have been offered to the staff involved. A recent inspection from Supporting People recommended the use of new risk assessment forms, which, on implementation, have proved very useful. A number of residents who helped out at Trinity House, Garvagh, were invited to attend the official opening of this new residential home for older people. They are keen to get involved in any future projects. There are currently no staffing issues.
80. **Carlisle House:** Referrals from both the Belfast and Northern Health and Social Care Trusts are steadily increasing. An RQIA Unannounced Pharmacy Inspection took place in January 2018. No requirements or recommendations were required from the inspection. The Inspector made special reference to the commitment and compassionate nature of staff and said that the management of residents' medicines was of the highest standard. A senior practitioner is on long-term sick leave following a cycling accident; the post is currently being covered internally by staff who can 'step up'. A new support worker has recently been appointed, which now means that Carlisle House has a full complement of support workers. However, one member will avail of maternity leave later this year.

81. **Property, Maintenance, Health and Safety:** Choice Housing has completed the refurbishment of fire alarm systems, fire doors, emergency lighting and heating system. Some minor snags are still to be resolved in the near future. The backyard has been refurbished and a new summerhouse and gazebo is planned for the front garden to enhance service users' experience.
82. **Funding:** We still await the outcome of the SNMA Review on Special Needs Management Allowance; the future looks bleak on SNMA being retained. On a positive note NHSC Trust have agreed to pass onto Carlisle House the annual uplift in funding from the HSC Board for Residential Homes; This is a significant increase and will offset the loss of SNMA. The Bamford Review remains stalled, which means that recent developments with the South Eastern and Southern Health Trusts are at a standstill.
83. The Committee continues to promote, and to encourage congregations to use, the Flourish material, pastoral guidelines and training in the area of suicide prevention and emotional wellbeing.
84. **Reconnect** – the replacement to the old Service User Group – continues to grow with positive results due to its greater focus on the continued recovery of group members.
85. **Gray's Court** is at full occupancy (7) and is a vital stepping-stone in the long-term recovery of those who have suffered from substance misuse. The Residents Group is highly motivated and well engaged in the process of moving to independent living. The Senior Project Worker remains on long-term sick leave and her post is being covered by suitable staff members from Carlisle House.
86. The Specialist Services Committee continues to focus on developing and drafting new objectives for the 2018 onwards Strategic Plan.

JOHN STANBRIDGE, Acting Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the General Assembly give thanks to God for the opening of Trinity House, Garvagh and for the efficient transfer of the work and witness of Ard Cluan (Londonderry) and York House (York House).
2. That the General Assembly note the launch of the Adult Safeguarding Policy, Guidelines and Pocket Guide on 15th March 2018 and encourage congregations to use the resources and avail of appropriate training.
3. That the General Assembly, recognising the under provision of support services for those with a Learning Disability in the post-19 age group, encourage the Council for Social Witness as it explores this matter and, if appropriate, engages with the Department of Health in collaboration with the Council for Public Affairs.
4. That the report of the Council for Social Witness be received.

Overtures on the Books

A. GENERAL

1. **Purpose** – to make it clear that, while the Committee’s responsibilities concerning a sexton/caretaker remain, the Kirk Session is the employing body:

Anent Par 35 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 35 of the Code, a new sub-paragraph (h) be added as follows:

- (h) act as the employing body concerning all those in remunerated employment in the congregation.

Anent Par 47(2)(f) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 47(2)(f) of the Code be deleted, and the following substituted in its place:

- (f) subject to the provisions of Par 35(h), be responsible for appointing or dismissing the sexton or caretaker;

2. **Purpose** – to make it clear that if someone is no longer under the jurisdiction of a Presbytery they are no longer Clerk:

Anent Par 65(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 65(2) of the Code, the words “at the pleasure of the court” be deleted and the words “at the pleasure of the court, provided they remain under its jurisdiction” be substituted in their place.

3. **Purpose** – to allow a Minister Emeritus to be included in the list of those who may celebrate marriage:

Anent Par 85(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 85(1) of the Code, the words “minister without charge or licentiate” be deleted and the words “minister without charge, minister emeritus (released), or licentiate” be substituted in their place.

B. COUNCIL FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS

4. **Purpose** – to update reference to Marriage and Family Committee in line with the new structures:

Anent Par 85(5)(6)and(7)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 85(5)(6)and(7) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in their place:

- (5) Where difficulty arises as to whether a marriage by the Church is advisable, the minister may consult with his Kirk Session or refer the matter to the Re-marriage Panel of the Pastoral Care Committee under the Council for Congregational Life and Witness before agreeing to celebrate the marriage.
- (6) A minister should not join in marriage a member of the Church with one holding beliefs or having a Church membership incompatible with the Christian witness of the Protestant Reformation, until careful instruction has been given in the doctrines and obligations of our evangelical faith or until other conditions approved by the Re-marriage Panel have been observed.
- (7) While this Church does not prohibit the marriage of a divorced person or persons, it is strongly recommended that a minister does not join in marriage a person who has been divorced, except in circumstances recognised by the Re-marriage Panel as justifying such action. In the case of a divorced minister wishing to remain in office after re-marriage the approval of Presbytery shall be obtained.

C. COUNCIL FOR MISSION IN IRELAND

5. **Purpose** – to remove the power to issue calls to deaconesses and lay agents from Kirk Sessions and conforms to Pars 277(4) and 305(2):

Anent Par 36(f) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 36(f) of the Code, the words “auxiliary ministers, deaconess and lay workers” be deleted and that the words “auxiliary ministers” be substituted in their place.

D. LINKAGE COMMISSION

6. **Purpose** – to change the order in which permissions are required concerning alterations to property:

Anent Par 57(5)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 57(5) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (5) The site and plans of all new buildings proposed to be erected on congregational property and of all proposed demolition, structural alterations of or structural additions to existing buildings thereon (including all proposals and designs for memorials, windows, artificial lighting and for seating and furnishings requisite for public worship) shall be authorised, successively, by the

congregation, the Presbytery and the Linkage Commission, and without such authorisations no such erection or alteration shall be undertaken or made.

Anent Par 76(b)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 76(b) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (b) subject to the provisions of paragraph Par 57(5) and (6) of the Code, examine and approve of the site and plans of all new Church buildings and of all permanent alterations or additions to Church buildings or property and of furnishings used in the conduct of public worship and of any demolition involved in such projects;

E. JUDICIAL COMMISSION

(1) OVERTURES RELATING TO MEMBERSHIP OF A CONGREGATION

Anent Par 39(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 39(1) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (1) Baptism shall be administered to those who make a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the infant children of one or both believing parents. It shall be administered in all cases by a minister and, as far as possible, it shall be administered publicly. The Kirk Session shall keep a register of all baptisms in the congregation.

Anent Par 39(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 39(3) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (3) The Kirk Session shall nurture and pastor all baptised persons in the congregation, not yet in full communion; and shall in due time seek to lead them to full confession of their faith by their partaking of the Lord's Supper.

Anent Par 41(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 41(1) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (1) The Kirk Session shall keep a roll of Communicant Members, and shall revise it at least once every three years. The Session shall report that the revision has been completed to the Presbytery. A List of Adherents shall also be kept and regularly revised.

Anent Par 45 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that immediately prior to Par 45 of the Code, the title “SECTION I – MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION” be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

SECTION 1(A) - MEMBERSHIP OF THE CONGREGATION

44A (1) “Communicant Members” are all baptised persons who have been admitted to Communion on profession of their faith by the Kirk Session, together with all those who have been received by the Kirk Session by transfer from other congregations or churches.

- (2) “Adherents” are all those who attend, contribute or claim connection with the congregation, but who are not Communicant Members.
- (3) “Voting Members” are Communicant Members who meet the qualifications for voting set out in Rules (see Pars 175-6).

SECTION 1(B) - MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION**Anent Par 45 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that a new sub-paragraph (4) be added in Par 45 of the Code, as follows:

- (4) Normally both Communicant Members and Adherents have the right to attend and speak at meetings of the congregation but only Communicant Members who are Voting Members may propose or second any resolution and vote thereon.

(2) OVERTURES REGARDING TRANSFER OF CONGREGATIONAL PROPERTY TO AN ASSOCIATED BODY**Anent Par 53(a) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 53(a) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (a) congregational trustees are or have been appointed to receive and hold the property of the congregation upon trust for the congregation and subject to its directions so far as those directions comply with the terms of such trust and with this Code save that, but subject to the provisions of paragraph 57(5), congregational property may be transferred to trustees (who shall be not less than three voting members of the congregation) for a separate body set up by, under the jurisdiction of, and accountable to the Kirk Session of the congregation; and

Anent Par 57 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that a new additional Par 57(5) of the Code be inserted (with current paragraphs 57(5)-(7) renumbered) as follows:

- (5) Congregational property may not be transferred to trustees for a separate body pursuant to the saving in paragraph 53(a) except in accordance with Guidelines relating thereto from time to time set by the General Assembly and without the prior consent of both the Presbytery and the Moderator's Advisory Committee.

(3) OVERTURES REGARDING THE RIGHT OF APPEAL IN CASES OF EMPLOYMENT GRIEVANCES**Anent Par 38 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that a new sub-paragraph (e) be added in Par 38 of the Code, as follows:

- (e) Notwithstanding the provisions of sub-paragraph (d), not receive a petition of any member or adherent of a congregation who is or has been employed by a congregation under a contract of employment in respect of any grievance relating to such contract of employment where such grievance has been dealt with either under any grievance or disciplinary policy of that congregation relating to its employees, or following any reference of such grievance to a Civil Court or an Industrial Tribunal.

Anent Par 75 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that a new sub-paragraph (e) be added in Par 75 of the Code, as follows:

- (e) Notwithstanding the provisions of sub-paragraphs (c) and (d), not receive an appeal from, nor a petition of, any member or adherent of a congregation who is or has been employed by that congregation under a contract of employment in respect of any grievance relating to such contract of employment where such grievance has been dealt with either under any grievance or disciplinary policy of that congregation relating to its employees, or following any reference of such grievance to a Civil Court or an Industrial Tribunal.

FOR INFORMATION

The following body is not under the control of the General Assembly. The report is included for information only.

PRESBYTERIAN CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

Dr Paul Gray (Executive Secretary) reports:

1. The Presbyterian Children's Society exists to support Presbyterian children in Ireland. It works mainly through ministers to alleviate poverty and financial hardship for these children and their families. This is done mostly through regular and exceptional grants. The Society is currently assisting approximately 760 children in 390 families in over 200 congregations throughout Ireland.
2. The year 2017 has been extremely busy for the Society. There was a major upsurge in applications and a further 75 families were accepted for regular help. Exceptional grants totalled 173 which was the highest number of exceptional grants ever recorded, the previous highest being 124 in 2014. Most exceptional grants given are between £500 and £600. Every new regular grant application will cost the Society between £1100 and £1600 depending on the family size. Almost all applications for grants are processed on the day they are received.
3. The Society was involved in assisting a number of families in financial need attend the PCI Family Holiday. The Society has been involved in helping families attend the holiday since 1994 and greatly values this sphere of cooperation with the staff and Council for Congregational Life and Witness.
4. The Society has produced a range of new resources this year. Details are available on the Society's website www.presbyterianchildrensociety.org. All resources are available from the Society and two sets of eleven pop-up stands which tell the story of the Society over 150 years are available to congregations for loan.
5. Whilst the Society is not under the control of the General Assembly, it works closely with the Church through its ministers. It is also working with relevant General Assembly councils to ensure congregations have appropriate resources to equip them in helping families in financial need.
6. The Society's work is independently supported by Presbyterian congregations and the Society gives thanks to all those who support the Society prayerfully, practically and financially throughout the year. The Society also welcomes enquiries about how it might assist children and families in need within any Presbyterian congregation. Finally the Society commends its work for the continued prayerful and financial support of the Church.

FOR INFORMATION

The following body is not under the control of the General Assembly. The report is included for information only.

**PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF IRELAND**

The Very Rev Dr John Lockington writes:

1. The Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland reports that throughout 2017 it has continued to promote the study of the historic Churches of the Presbyterian order in Ireland through its programme of talks, lectures and visits, and through its publications and website.
2. We have continued to operate in line with the requirements of the Charity Commission, both in how we present our accounts, and also as we try to meet the other requirements as they are notified to us. We have tried to do this with great care, and we believe we have been able to operate as a responsible charity.
3. Last year, we reported the difficulties we have had to face living with uncertainty regarding our future accommodation. That same situation has remained with us during the greater part of the year. Uncertainties over funding and how best to design the accommodation in Assembly Buildings to care for our library and archives within the constraints of the budget have tested us. At the end of the year however things began to happen with great rapidity. A special Meeting of Council was held on 21st November when the following resolution was passed unanimously, following a paper ballot:

The Council of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland accepts the invitation of the Commercial Use of Assembly Buildings Task Group, under the General Council, to move back to Assembly Buildings, subject to the premises being made suitable for our requirements, with security of tenure and conditional on funding being made available.

4. This meeting endorsed the decision of an earlier Special Meeting on 12th October, 2016 that the Chairman (Dr Donald Patton) the Joint Secretary (Dr Godfrey Brown) and the Treasurer (Derek Alexander) should represent the Society in negotiation about the move, and added the name of Dr John Lockington. The representatives were thanked for their work to date, and Dr Patton emphasised that they would do their best to forward the project recognising the constraints within which they would have to work.
5. Since that time a great deal of detailed work has been done. We have not been able to do everything we would have liked to do, but we see in what is being offered to us a real opportunity to move forward as a society, and to offer a much better service to the churches, and to the wider public in a variety of ways. We will still need to seek additional sources of funding in order to build upon what we are being given,

and to achieve things which as yet we cannot afford, and especially the provision of additional rolling shelving for our growing archive material.

6. The new location at the main entrance to the Assembly Buildings will, we believe, increase our contact with the members of the Presbyterian Church who come to the Church offices or the Assembly Hall as well as those people who attend conferences. It will make the Society accessible to the thousands of visitors to Belfast who stay in the increasing number of local hotels.
7. The mammoth task of removal will make it necessary to close our library for a period of time and to curtail the services we are able to offer.
8. Once again this year we had an excellent programme of lectures, and other less formal events, and have been pleased to see attendances well maintained, and in some cases significantly increased, drawing in quite a number of new people. It was particularly pleasing to see a capacity audience for the Robert Allen Lecture in May on the subject of the Prof Davey trial for heresy. Events also included a visit to Culturlann (the former Broadway Church) and our Field Trip which took us this summer to East Tyrone.
9. During the year, apart from the publication of the *Bulletin*, we were not able to go into print again until the very end of the year, when Dr Godfrey Brown's booklet, *The Last of the Seceders*, was produced. A number of pieces of writing relating to lectures this past year either have been or will soon be printed by their respective authors. We have also been working hard on some time-consuming tasks which will hopefully blossom into print, or find a place on our website during the forthcoming year. Work has also progressed on the adoption of a revised publication policy.
10. Thanks to funding from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, via the Ulster Scots agency, the Ulster Historical Agency with the support of this Society has published a very attractive pocket History and Heritage Trail called "The Story of the Presbyterians in Ulster." This can be obtained from the Society.
11. The move to Assembly Buildings will enable us to be involved more fully with the development of the Reception Area, our nearest neighbour, where it is intended that exhibitions about the work and witness of the Presbyterian Church, as well as its history will be on display. We continue to work closely with the Task Group identifying suitable material for display.
12. The Society welcomes donations of books, pamphlets, congregational histories and artefacts, minute books and communion tokens. These may be deposited with the society either as a gift or as an indefinite loan. We hold many Synod and Presbytery records, and are delighted that a growing number of congregational records are also being entrusted to our care.

13. The Society continues to share information with other organisations, agencies and blogs which help us raise our profile, and publicise our publications. We now have 470 followers on Facebook, which can be accessed via the blog icon on the home page of our website. This keeps a wide public informed about new books or events.
14. We continue to follow through on the Action Plan resulting from our Away Day in early 2016, and regularly monitor in how far we are achieving its goals. There have been a number of solid achievements which we have already put into practice. In some cases we have fallen behind, often because of the uncertainties to which we have already referred.
15. A draft of proposed changes to the Constitution to ensure better governance and to meet the requirements of the Charity Commission was approved by Council on 18th January 2017 and adopted by the Annual General Meeting on 23rd March 2017.
16. The Society's website continues to be one of our principal means of communicating with the general public, and this is reflected by a regular increase in numbers using it, and joining the Society as associate members. We continue to make significant improvements in the number and range of articles on our history page, and in our updating and presentation of the *History of Presbyterian Congregations*. All our *Bulletins* up to 2011 are now on the website and can be viewed by members.
17. We are really grateful to all our volunteers who help us out for a few hours each week – filing, classifying library books for the electronic catalogue, indexing and transcribing records, preparing mailings. We will need more help than ever in the months ahead, and our librarian would be glad to hear from anyone who might be able to do this for us. We would also thank all who give talks, write booklets, articles and reviews, and assist in many others ways. Most of all we would pay tribute to our Librarian and Archivist, Valerie Adams, for her magnificent work on our behalf, and her enormous enthusiasm and vision for the Society.
18. We would urge all members of our denomination to consider joining our Society, to invite others to become members, buy our publications, and support our various events. As most Presbyteries now have Historical Agents we hope this will strengthen our links with many more congregations. Our aim is to serve the Church in promoting knowledge and understanding of its rich history. If anyone would like a speaker for their Church or organisation, we will do our best to arrange it.

FOR INFORMATION

The following funds are not under the control of the General Assembly. The report is included for information only.

OLD AGE FUND, WOMEN'S FUND AND INDIGENT LADIES' FUND

The Rev Paul Erskine reports:

1. The Directors report that, during the last financial year which ended 31st December 2017, 106 beneficiaries (49 in the Old Age Fund, 33 in the Women's Fund and 24 in the Indigent Ladies' Fund) received grants.
2. The changes in beneficiaries during the year is as follows:

Beneficiaries receiving Quarterly Grant	Old Age Fund	Presbyterian Women's Fund	Indigent Ladies' Fund	TOTAL
At 1 January 2016	38	28	19	85
New Grants provided	6	2	4	12
Deaths	(2)	(1)	–	(2)
Grants no longer required	(1)	–	–	(1)
<hr/>				
At 31 December 2017	41	29	23	93
Beneficiaries receiving one-off donations	5	3	1	9
Deaths and Grants no longer required (as above)	3	1	–	4
Number of Beneficiaries receiving assistance during the year	49	33	24	106

3. The total distribution of the Funds in Grants, Donations and Gifts was £175,947 (£77,834 from the Old Age Fund, £53,840 from the Women's Fund and £44,273 from the Indigent Ladies' Fund).
4. An annual grant of £1,440, paid quarterly, was sent to beneficiaries during the year (2016: £1,440).
5. A 'Special Gift' of £360 (2016: £360) was sent to every beneficiary prior to Christmas.
6. During the year the Directors responded sympathetically to various problems which had been brought to their attention. They gave one-off donations, as needed, to assist in particular cases where immediate financial aid was more appropriate than annual grants. Ministers are asked to bear in mind the possibility of help from these funds in similar cases connected with their own congregations.
7. The Directors assure the Church that all monies that come to the Funds are carefully and wisely spent.

8. The Directors of the Funds deeply appreciate the kindness and thoughtfulness of those who have remembered the work of the Funds either by gift or bequest, and hope that their example may encourage others to support this vital aspect of the Church's outreach.
9. The Directors of the Funds wish to thank the Staff for the sensitive and sympathetic way in which they carried out the efficient administration of the Funds during the year.

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