

MINUTES
OF THE
PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
General Assembly
OF THE
Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Held at Belfast, June, 2025
FIRST SESSION

Tuesday, 10 June 2025

10.00am

Within Assembly Buildings

The Right Rev Dr RM Murray, Moderator of the General Assembly, welcomed all present.

The Moderator constituted the Assembly with prayer and led in public worship.

RECEPTION OF CORRESPONDING MEMBERS & DELEGATES

Church of Ireland

- Rev Canon Amanda Adams
- Keith Gardiner MD MCh MSc MA FRCS (Gen)

The Methodist Church in Ireland

- Rev Dr John Alderdice, *Circuit Superintendent – Belfast Central & South Circuit*
- Ms Elaine Barnett, *Connexional Lay Leader*

Religious Society of Friends

- Mr Eoin Stephenson

Irish Council of Churches

- Rev Karen Campbell, *General Secretary*
- Mr Mark Kernohan, *Interim Administrative Support*

The Greek Evangelical Church (GEC)

- Rev Dr George Adam, *Moderator*

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Livingstonia Synod, Malawi

- Rev William Tembo, *General Secretary*

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), Kenya

- Rev Dr Robert Waihenya, *Secretary General*

The Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera (GMIH), Indonesia

- Rev Demianus Ice, *Moderator*
- Rev Ferry Kabarey, *Vice Moderator*
- Rev Abram Ugu, *Secretary*

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church (USA)

- Rev Andrew Smith, *Program Director of the Resound Project, New York City*

DAVID ALLEN

The Moderator welcomed:

- From the Church of Ireland – Rev Canon Amanda Adams; Dr Keith Gardiner
- From the Methodist Church in Ireland – Rev Dr John Alderdice; Ms Elaine Bennett
- From the Religious Society of Friends – Mr Eoin Stephenson
- From the Irish Council of Churches – Rev Karen Campbell; Mr Mark Kernohan

Rev Dr John Alderdice replied and conveyed greetings.

The Moderator welcomed:

- From the Greek Evangelical Church – Rev Dr George Adam
- From the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Livingstonia Synod – Rev William Tembo
- From the Presbyterian Church of East Africa — Rev Dr Robert Waihenya
- From the Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera – Rev Demianus Ice; Rev Ferry Kabarey; Rev Abram Ugu
- From the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (USA) – Rev Andrew Smith

Rev Dr George Adam and Rev Dr Robert Waihenya replied and conveyed greetings.

At the invitation of the Moderator, Rev Andrew Smith addressed the House.

The Initial Report of the **GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE** (Reports pp3-7) along with Resolutions 1-5 (Reports p285) was submitted by the Rev RMcM Mackay, together with the following Supplementary Report and Supplementary Resolutions 2(a) and 3(a):

PRE-ASSEMBLY MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

1. The General Assembly Business Committee met on Thursday morning, 5 June 2025. It received a number of reports regarding preparations for the General Assembly.
2. The Committee considered the draft of late and additional items of business submitted by the notified date and agreed the following:

- a. That amendments submitted by Rev Jonathan Boyd, with regard to Business Item 13 (Memorials), Resolutions 3 and 4 (Reports p292) be licensed.
 - b. That all of the remaining material in this Supplementary Reports Booklet be licensed, and instructed that it be made available in printed form and online from Tuesday morning onwards and that the Acting Clerk be permitted to make any minor corrections.
3. The Committee considered Item 13 of the 2025 Assembly Business regarding the Report of the Linkage Commission on Dissolutions & Mergers (pp292-293 of the General Assembly Reports, 2025).

The Committee noted that five of the resolutions (Resolutions 3-7, pp292-293) relate to the merging of congregations and one resolution (Resolution 8, p293) relates to the dissolution of a congregation.

As the Linkage Commission Report is not being presented verbally in 2025, but only in printed form, the Business Committee agreed to allow representatives of the mentioned congregations to make short speeches, if desired. The overall total time permitted for such speeches would be five minutes per resolution and not per person. No other speeches would be permitted.

A Resolution to this effect is appended as **Resolution (2a)** of the Initial Report of the Business Committee.

4. The Committee considered Item 16 of the 2025 Assembly Business regarding the Private Session. As a Confidential Supplementary Report Booklet will be made available at Registration from Tuesday morning, the Business Committee recognised that members would not have had the opportunity to submit any substantive proposed amendments in advance. Therefore, the Committee agreed that if such amendments were to be made, they should be with the Acting Clerk no later than noon on Wednesday, 11 June 2025. This would allow the Business Committee to licence any such amendments, if in order.

A resolution to this effect is appended as **Resolution 3(a)** of the Initial Report of the Business Committee.

5. The Committee considered a request from the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster to meet during the General Assembly. The Business Committee granted permission and allocated tomorrow, Wednesday, between 1.00pm-2.00pm (lunchtime) for the Presbytery meeting. (See Resolution (4a) p

6. Additional Resolutions

- 2(a) That representatives for the congregations named in Resolutions numbered 3-8 (pp292-293) be permitted to speak to their relevant resolution but that the total time allocated for speeches to each resolution be restricted to five minutes.
- 3(a) That any substantive proposed amendments to the report(s) in the Confidential Private Session Report Booklet be with the Acting Clerk no later than 12.00 noon on Wednesday, 11 June 2025 for licensing by the Business Committee.

ROY MACKAY

APPENDIX 1

Additional Reports from other Church Assemblies

Quakers in Ireland Yearly Meeting

25-27 April 2025 – Friends’ School Lisburn

The Rev Dr Liz Hughes reports:

1. It was a great privilege to represent PCI at the yearly gathering of Quakers in Ireland. The theme for this year was “A Learning Community” and the appropriate setting was Friends’ School Lisburn which has been celebrating its 250th anniversary. Visiting delegates were warmly welcomed on arrival and assigned an individual Friend to guide them through the various sessions and events.
2. The first session, which was mainly routine business and finance, began with twenty minutes of silent worship – a practice which continued throughout the weekend. All visitors were given a warm welcome by Will Haire (Clerk) and at a later stage in proceedings I took the opportunity to pass on the prayerful good wishes of our own denomination.
3. Following some statistical review work, it was recognised that the formal membership of Friends throughout Ireland was now reduced to a total of 1300 members - but there were in addition a significant number of people who might also attend meetings or associate as Quakers in other ways without becoming signed up members.

4. I was fascinated by how business was conducted. Different views were welcomed and respectfully heard yet each time a consensus was reached and relevant decisions taken. At the end of each discussion the minutes taken were read, amended where appropriate and agreed. At this Yearly Meeting each session covered a different aspect of Learning.

Learning with our schools.

5. We heard from Principals Stephen Moore from Friends' School Lisburn and Keith Lemon from Newtown School Waterford as well as other school-based speakers. The Quaker ethos was described as “an emphasis on Quaker values, a strong sense of whole school community, care for the individual, an emphasis on that of God in each one, few rules but high expectations of behaviour, good relationships, conflict resolution, a breadth of activities and preparation for life.”
6. **Learning in our meetings** was all about how to support local meetings to thrive. Quakers in Scotland, England and Wales have introduced a development support system which has greatly enhanced the work across the water. Development workers encourage four main principles:
- Meeting for Worship is the bedrock of living as a Quaker
 - Quaker communities are loving, inclusive and all-age
 - ‘All Friends understand and live by Quaker discipline’
 - ‘Quaker values are active in the world’.
7. **Quakers, Learning and Education - using the future to rethink the present.** The Friday evening session was a public lecture by James Nelson suggesting that “*the readiness to think differently about the future opens each one of us to transformative learning, releasing us from our previous assumptions and freeing us all to think and act in a new way.*” I must confess that after a day of careful concentration and very hard seats I was glad for the opportunity to go back home and join others in watching this public lecture online.
8. **Learning from Friends around the world** - we heard from work supporting conscientious objectors in Georgia – we learned that the Ukraine/Russia war resulted in huge populations shifts with whole families leaving, along with men trying to avoid conscription. “At one stage, 500,000 Russians had entered Georgia. Most of these have now

- moved on to other countries or returned to Russia.” But there are still many others who have stayed and who need practical help and support.
9. Michael Eccles from the Europe and Middle East Section had just returned from visiting Quaker schools in Ramallah in the West Bank and Brummana in Lebanon his report was poignant – the schools were thriving and exceptionally well respected but obviously operating under very difficult circumstances. The group who visited met with Lutheran minister, the Rev Dr Munther Isaac, who encouraged them to keep on speaking up about the situation in Gaza and the West Bank and not to be afraid as a faith community to speak the truth and use words like genocide and apartheid when naming what was taking place.
 10. **Learning how to live out our faith** – introduced voices from Quaker Service in North Belfast; Quaker Faith in Action supporting outreach projects both on the island of Ireland and throughout the world; and the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva which provided a quiet space for diplomats to come together for a meal and reflect on the issues of the day. The staff in the office have four main areas of work: Human Rights and Refugees, Sustainable and Just Economic Systems, Peace and Disarmament, and Human Impacts of Climate Change.
 11. I feel greatly blessed to have learnt so much about Quakers in Ireland and across the globe. I not only benefitted from being present for the main conference sessions but also through the opportunities over coffee and mealtimes to chat to so many fascinating people – Friends from all arts and parts of Ireland - and hear their individual stories of belonging or becoming part of the Quaker family.

Report of the Church of Ireland General Synod 2025

9-10 May 2025 – Lawlor’s Hotel, Naas, Co Kildare

The Very Rev Dr Sam Mawhinney reports:

1. I was warmly welcomed and enjoyed much generous hospitality. The opening service of worship, in St David’s Church, Naas, was encouraging, the singing was enthusiastic and the liturgy and communion, reverent and full of truth. The preacher, the Bishop of Cloyne and Cork, the Rt Rev Paul Colton, focused our attention on the need for mission in the context of a needy world.
2. The President’s address by the Archbishop of Armagh, The Most Rev John McDowell, addressed contentment in a difficult world; leadership

- that was confident, humble and collaborative, delivered by “a shepherd’s hand”; the need to minister to young people in light of the “pandemic damage” they suffered; the legacy of trauma produced by the “troubles”; with a strong plea to the church to be welcoming to the many immigrants who are arriving in Ireland.
3. The early part of the first day introduced “Bills” reminding us of their parliamentary heritage, now presented in a new and simplified form, which were mainly focused on governance issues.
 4. A motion calling for the setting up of a working group to investigate the possibility of allowing C of I clergy to solemnize marriages in secular venues as part of the church’s outreach, generated a debate that brought many to the podium, with high quality speeches and a variety of views expressed. Ideas expressed included the need for evangelism, what is evangelism, the idea of sacred space, building or the whole world, and marriage as a picture of the church and the idea of sacrament was mentioned. The motion was passed, and so the debate continues.
 5. The strong attachment of the C of I to the history of buildings and Ireland came across in the motion to provide new arrangements for the governance of Christ Church Cathedral, which was built in 1028. The volume of work needed to bring the function of its board into a Company Limited by Guarantee was extraordinary. The motion was passed.
 6. It was noted on several occasions that the Council of Nicaea and creed are 1700 years old, and various events are planned to mark this significant anniversary of the Christian Church and its importance in defining and defending the Divinity of Christ.
 7. We thank God for the strong commitment to Education the C of I has given over the years and the presentation of the Board of Education highlighted the “Follow Me” revised religious education curriculum and format. It was noted that the voluntary work of Governors and Transferor Representatives is becoming more onerous and prayer for all involved in education was called for.
 8. Completing day one we also had reports from the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue, Commission on Ministry, and the Council for Mission.
 9. The second day started with a short act of worship and then the report of the Standing Committee of the General Synod – this appears to be

- equivalent to General Council and covered a wide variety of issues with significant work and reports. This group now meets in person as they believe it facilitates better dialogue and discussion. Topics raised included disability, safeguarding, communication, children and families, curacies, chaplaincy, response to historic institutional abuse, and the Church and society.
10. The Church and Society Commission (CASC) has recently produced written material called, “Healing and Hope” (addressing the trauma of the troubles); a liturgical service of the word expressing lament, and they will offer training in their college on trauma informed pastoral care as part of their continuing training in pastoral care. There were stories told of the ongoing hurt experienced by C of I members during the troubles.
 11. The CASC also dealt with the issue of Assisted Suicide and are in agreement with PCI on how wrong the present direction of travel by government is, upholding the truth of life as a gift from God, and stand in opposition to the significant cultural shift in doctor patient relationship if AS legislation were passed, and the “iniquitous” underfunding of Hospice (Palliative Care) services.
 12. The relationship with the Methodist Church continues to evolve under the work of the Covenant Council and there is a welcome and strong acceptance by both denominations of the outworking of this covenant.
 13. The C of I is conscious of declining numbers, the need for change and many spoke of the need for evangelism and mission, to that end they have set up a Pioneer Ministry Governing Council which trains and encourages pioneers within each diocese to explore possible new avenues of ministry. This is not solely about Church Planting but embraces a wide variety of projects. This type of thinking and mission generated passionate speeches on the need to see men and women, boys and girls come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 14. The General Synod concludes with an evening session on Zoom, three days after the two-day in-person conference, where further presentations are given, this year by the marriage council and the youth department and with the wrapping up of all formal business.
 15. It was a privilege to represent the General Assembly at this year’s C of I General Synod, to enjoy their welcome and hospitality, to meet people who serve the Lord Jesus faithfully in their church, to encourage them in their mission, and to experience the wide breadth of their church.

16. The C of I General Synod will meet in Newcastle, Co Down for three days in 2026.

Moved by the Rev RMcM Mackay, seconded by the Rev MR Burnside, and agreed:

1. That the Draft Order of Business for the 2025 General Assembly be approved.
2. That the 'Guide to Assembly Procedure' (yellow pages) be approved with the appropriate General Assembly Standing Orders suspended where necessary to facilitate alternative presentations etc.
 - 2(a). That representatives for the congregations named in resolutions numbered 3-8 (pp292-293) be permitted to speak to their relevant resolution but that the total time allocated for speeches to each resolution be restricted to five minutes.
3. That at the 2025 General Assembly, and all subsequent General Assemblies, substantive proposed amendments, which have not been submitted to the Business Committee for licensing one week in advance of the Assembly meeting, will only be permitted, at the discretion of the Moderator, if they genuinely arise in the course of the debate, or if they relate to additional resolutions tabled in the Supplementary Business.
 - 3(a). That any substantive proposed amendments to the report(s) in the Confidential Private Session Report Booklet be with the Acting Clerk no later than 12.00 noon on Wednesday, 11 June 2025 for licensing by the Business Committee.
4. That a grant of up to £25,000 be made from the Incidental Fund to the Arrangements Panel of the General Assembly Business Committee.
 - 4(a). That the Dublin & Munster Presbytery be given permission to meet tomorrow (Wednesday) at lunchtime.
5. That the Initial Report of the General Assembly Business Committee be received.

The **REPORTS OF PRESBYTERIES** (Reports pp114-120) along with Resolution 1 (Reports p289) were submitted by the Rev Dr TD Allen.

Moved by the Acting Clerk, seconded by the Rev TJ Stothers, and agreed:

1. That the Reports of Presbyteries be received.

T DAVID ALLEN

The Report of the **COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL WITNESS** (Reports pp121-152) along with Resolutions 1-4 (Reports pp289-290) was submitted by Rev DW Brice. Permission was given to Mr Dermot Parsons, Council Secretary, to address the House.

Moved by the Rev DW Brice, formally seconded by the Very Rev Dr CJC McMullen, and agreed:

1. That the General Assembly commend the work of Council for Social Witness managers in securing significant improvement in the Council's financial performance in 2024 and welcomes the Council's efforts to ensure that the outstanding issues are robustly addressed.
2. That the General Assembly welcome the commitment of the Council for Social Witness to ensure services that distinctively reflect the Christian ethos of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland are available for people with complex needs.
3. That the General Assembly approve the draft policies on Adult Safeguarding (Northern Ireland), Adult Safeguarding (Republic of Ireland), Child Safeguarding (Northern Ireland), Child Safeguarding (Republic of Ireland) and Criminal Vetting Checks.
4. That the Report of the Council for Social Witness be received.

The sederunt came to a close at 11.54am, the Moderator pronouncing the Benediction.

SECOND SESSION

Tuesday, 10 June 2025

2.00pm

The Assembly convened, the Moderator leading in prayer.

Section 1 of the Report of the **GENERAL COUNCIL** (Reports pp1-30) along with Resolutions 6-9 (Reports pp285-286) was submitted by the Very Rev Dr DJ Bruce.

Moved by the Very Rev Dr DJ Bruce, seconded by the Rev Dr TD Allen, and agreed:

General Assembly Structures and Resources Review Panel

That the General Assembly note the Guiding Principles outlined in the Report of the General Assembly Structures and Resources Review Panel and, as a result:

- (a) The General Assembly affirm that the primary function of its central structures is to support the overall mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. As a result, services provided by those central structures should align with the denomination's mission.
- (b) The General Assembly therefore further affirm that:
 - (i) The local congregation, led by presbyters, is the primary unit of mission and ministry, operating under the oversight of the courts of the Church.
 - (ii) Decisions regarding local mission and ministry should be made at congregational level whenever possible, with oversight provided by presbyteries and the General Assembly.
 - (iii) The role of the General Assembly is to provide oversight and to envision, resource and support local congregations and presbyteries in fulfilling their mission and ministry. This will include encouraging participation in wider mission and ministry, normally beyond the scope of any one congregation or presbytery, with the General Assembly setting the vision and providing oversight of the delivery of this.
 - (iv) The General Assembly must prioritise such work that only the church in mission and ministry is best placed to do.

- (v) The General Assembly must model Kingdom values in its mission and ministry, pursuing its vocation to influence both society and government in line with those values, especially as an advocate for the vulnerable and the marginalised.
- (vi) The General Assembly must be courageous and always follow the evident prompting of the Holy Spirit.

That the General Assembly note the ‘signposts’ for the future work of the panel in relation to General Assembly structures, as outlined in Section B of the Report of the General Assembly Structures and Resources Review Panel.

That on the recommendation of the General Assembly Structures and Resources Review Panel, the General Assembly agree:

- (a) that classification decisions for income, investments and other assets be determined at the overall organisational level rather than at Council level;
- (b) that the Finance Panel of the Support Services Committee, in consultation with the auditors, revise the accounting policies to reflect this alternative approach;
- (c) that to minimise the potential impact on existing financial plans or budgets, any assets which will be re-classified by the revised approach are treated initially as Designated funds in line with their existing restriction rather than General funds.

General

That Section 1 of the General Council Report, with the exception of the Initial Report of the General Assembly Business Committee, be received.

The Report of the **TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND** (Reports pp153-155) along with Resolutions 1-3 (Reports p290) was submitted by Mr SFA Johnston, together with the following in Supplementary Report (pS8):

1. Chairman of Trustees (p.153)

The Chairman of the Trustees is Mr Stephen Johnston, not Rev Dr Donald Watts.

DAVID ALLEN

Moved by Mr SFA Johnston, seconded by Mr SJS Warke, and agreed:

That the recommendations be adopted in relation to:

- (a) the Mrs AM Davidson Trust;
- (b) the Sir Wm V McCleery Trust;
- (c) the Miss Ida Mary McGeown Trust;
- (d) the Miss Irene Scott Trust;
- (e) the Victor Morrow Trust.

That the General Assembly agree to join the Church Investors Group.

That the Report of the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland be received.

Section 2 of the Report of the **GENERAL COUNCIL** (Reports pp31-55) along with Resolutions 10-18 (Reports p287) was submitted by Mr DW Thomson, together with the following Supplementary Reports (ppS6 & S8-S9) and Additional Resolution 16(a) (pS6):

Supplementary Report 1 (p.S6)

1. Request from a Presbytery for a minister to be enrolled as Minister Emeritus under Par 226(a) of the Code.

A request has been received from the Presbytery of Tyrone, that the Rev Alan Samuel Thompson be enrolled as Minister Emeritus of Dungannon congregation. Mr Thompson resigned from his charge due to ill health on 10 February 2025 and, at that point, became minister without charge. He has reached the age of 60 and is, therefore, eligible to be declared as Minister Emeritus in this way.

The General Assembly Advisory Committee has considered the request, and recommend that it be approved.

Additional Resolution

16(a) That, under Par 226(a) of the Code, the Rev Alan Samuel Thompson be enrolled as Minister Emeritus of the congregation of Dungannon.

DAVID ALLEN

Supplementary Report 2 (ppS8-S9)

1. **Report of the Support Services Committee – Appendix 1** (p42)
Rev Jackie Spence – Retirement date amended to: ‘21/09/2025’ (*on or after*)
2. **Report of the Support Services Committee -Appendix 2**
Vacancy Conveners’ Fees in Table 7 at the bottom of page 45 are incorrect.

7. VACANCY CONVENERS’ FEES

Supply Fee plus

< 100 Families + 0%	128	124	186	179
100<200 Families + 5%	130	130	188	188
200<300 families +10%	136	136	197	197
300+ Families + 15%	143	143	206	206
Travel - mileage rate	18p	18c	26c	26c

The correct table is the one below.

7. VACANCY CONVENERS’ FEES

Supply Fee plus

< 100 Families + 0%	128	124	186	179
100<200 Families + 5%	134	130	195	188
200<300 families +10%	141	136	205	197
300+ Families + 15%	147	143	214	206
Travel - mileage rate	18p	18p	26c	26c

DAVID ALLEN

Moved by Mr DW Thomson, seconded by Mr Martin Hampton, and agreed:

United Appeal

That the United Appeal and Grants for 2026 be as set out in the Report of the United Appeal Committee (see pp33–36).

Support Services

That for 2025, the Assessments Rates, along with the estimated allocation

of funds, be as set out in Appendix 1 to the Report of the Support Services Committee (see p42).

That the rate of assessment for the Pension Fund be set at 17.5% of stipend paid in the year.

That the General Council is given delegated authority to amend salary bands and levels and deal with associated issues.

That the 2025 budgeted expenditure for the Incidental Fund be as set out in Appendix 3 to the Report of the Support Services Committee (see p47).

That for the ensuing year, references to 'age 65' in the rules of Prolonged Disability Fund be interpreted as referring to 'normal retirement age' rather than any specific age and that notice is given to make this change permanent at the 2026 General Assembly.

That under Par 223(3) of the Code, leave to retire pre-66 be granted for:

- Rev JA (Jackie) Spence (Upper & Lower Clonaneese), on or after 21 September 2025;
- Rev SJ Mervyn Lindsay (Pomeroy & Sandholes), on or after 12 January 2026;
- Rev Stephen P Moore (Gilnahirk), on or after 15 September 2025;

16(a). That, under Par 226(a) of the Code, the Rev Alan Samuel Thompson be enrolled as Minister Emeritus of the congregation of Dungannon.

Pension Scheme Review Panel

That the recommendations of the PCI Pension Scheme Review Panel be adopted, as outlined in paragraph 8 on p55 of its Report.

General

That Section 2 of the General Council Report be received.

Intermission

The Assembly engaged in reflective worship.

The sederunt came to a close at 5.37pm, the Moderator pronouncing the Benediction.

THIRD SESSION

Tuesday, 10 June 2025

7.30pm

The Assembly convened, the Moderator leading in prayer.

The Report of the **COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS** (Reports pp156-175) along with Resolutions 1-5 (Reports pp290-291) was submitted by the Rev DJ Kane. Permission was given to Dr Rebecca Stevenson, Public Affairs Officer, to address the House.

Moved by the Rev DJ Kane, formally seconded by the Acting Clerk, and agreed:

1. That the General Assembly:
 - (a) welcome the long-awaited publication of the Special Educational Needs Reform Agenda in Northern Ireland and strongly encourages the implementation of the delivery plans as a matter of urgency;
 - (b) recognise and affirm the vital work carried out in special schools across the island of Ireland and encourage congregations to make real and meaningful links with such schools in their local area;
 - (c) commend the ongoing commitment and dedication of those who serve on schools' Boards of Governors (NI) and on Boards of Management (RoI) and encourage all Presbyterians with an interest in the education of children and young people to prayerfully consider being actively involved in these roles.
2. That the General Assembly express grave concern regarding the proposed Private Members' Bill on 'Banning Conversion Therapy Practices in Northern Ireland.'
3. That the General Assembly:
 - (a) encourage prayer that the 'Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill' will fail to pass the report stage of the parliamentary process when it returns to the House of Commons for debate;
 - (b) encourage members of PCI to write to local MPs, TDs, Senators and members of the House of Lords calling on both Irish and UK governments to prioritise investment in and the provision of, the best possible palliative care with the utmost urgency;

- (c) welcome the establishment of the ‘Living and Dying Well’ resource hub and commend its use to the denomination;
- (d) commend the work carried out by hospices, palliative care inpatient units, hospital palliative care teams, and community palliative care teams;
- (e) urge the NI Health Committee to bring forward a comprehensive ‘Palliative Care Strategy’ for NI with the utmost expediency, underpinned by a Palliative Care Policy;
- (f) call on Northern Ireland MPs to take urgent action to extend the exemptions from the proposed increased employer’s national insurance contributions set out in the October 2024 UK budget to hospices, residential care and nursing homes (social care settings) in line with other parts of the NHS;
- (g) encourage ministers to set aside a Sunday annually to consider the importance of holistic end-of-life care, affirming the innate value and dignity of every human life from conception to death, and to pray for those who resource and deliver essential palliative care services in our communities.

4. That the General Assembly encourage the Council for Public Affairs, through its Republic of Ireland Panel, to engage with the Programme for Government in Ireland, on issues such as education, housing and migration.
5. That the Report of the Council for Public Affairs be received.

At the invitation of the Moderator, members of Assembly spent some time praying in groups and as individuals. The sederunt came to a close at 8.17pm, the Moderator leading in prayer.

FOURTH SESSION

Wednesday, 11 June 2025

10.00am

The Assembly convened, the Moderator leading in prayer.

Section 3 of The Report of the **GENERAL COUNCIL** (Reports pp56-100) along with Resolutions 19-25 (Reports p288) was submitted by the Rev Dr TD Allen

Moved by the Rev Dr TD Allen, seconded by the Very Rev Dr DJ Bruce, and agreed:

General Assembly Advisory Committee

19. That the Appointment Process (GAAC Appendix 1), Job Description (GAAC Appendix 1a) and Personnel Specification (GAAC Appendix 1b) for the post of Clerk Designate of the General Assembly and General Secretary Designate of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland be agreed.
20. That the following Guidelines be adopted and provided to Kirk Sessions regarding the admission to baptism of the children of unmarried couples:
 - (a) Sacramental discipline remains the responsibility of the Kirk Session, (Code Par.39(2)). In all difficult or complex cases of requests for baptism, the minister should bring the matter before the Kirk Session for consideration and decision.
 - (b) The children of unmarried couples should normally not be baptised, unless there are clear exceptional pastoral circumstances which the Kirk Session can justify to a superior court, if required.
 - (c) Pastoral sensitivity should always be shown while engaging with unmarried couples seeking baptism for their children, with a view to encouraging them towards Christian marriage.
21. That, as an interim measure for the 2025 World Development Appeal and any Moderator's Appeal, a change is made to current practice to allow congregations, if they so desire, to specify to which development agency (Christian Aid or Tearfund) their donation be sent, and that no differences in the amounts allocated between agencies be "made up" centrally.

22. That the General Assembly approve the “Affirmation of Fraternal and Confessional Relations between the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (USA)” (see GAAC Appendix 5, p82).

Communications Strategy

23. That the Report on the Communications Strategy be received and the recommendations, as outlined in Appendix A of the report (p95), be adopted.

Guysmere Development Panel

24. That the Report of the Guysmere Development Panel be received and the steps outlined noted.

General

25. That Section 3 of the General Council Report be received.

The **MEMORIAL OF THE KIRK SESSION OF CARNMONEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH** (Reports pp176-177), along with Resolution 1 (p291) was submitted by the Rev SN Hawthorne.

Moved by the Rev SN Hawthorne, seconded by Mr Graeme Craig, and agreed:

1. That the Memorial be received and its prayer granted.

The Moderator led the House in prayer.

The **MEMORIAL OF THE KIRK SESSION OF FIRST BANGOR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH** (Reports p178), along with Resolution 1 (p291) was submitted by the Rev Mairisine Stanfield.

Moved by the Rev Mairisine Stanfield, seconded by Mrs PA Kennedy, and agreed:

2. That the Memorial be received and its prayer granted.

The **MEMORIALS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF ARMAGH AND OF THE PRESBYTERY OF DOWN** (Reports pp179-182) were submitted by the Very Rev Dr DJ Bruce, along with Resolutions 1-5 (Reports, p292) The following Licensed Amendments to Resolutions 3 and 4 were

submitted in the name of Rev Jonathan Boyd (Supplementary Reports pS8):

Licensed Amendment to Resolution 3

Delete Resolution 3 (on p292) and replace with the following:

3. That the issues contained in the Memorial of the Armagh Presbytery be considered by the Doctrine Committee and that the issues contained in the Memorial of the Down Presbytery be considered by an Ad-Hoc Panel.

Licensed Amendment to Resolution 4

Delete Resolution 4 (and 5) (on p292) and replace with the following:

4. That the membership of the Ad-Hoc Panel regarding the Memorial of the Down Presbytery be referred to the General Council for decision.

Moved by the Very Rev Dr DJ Bruce, seconded by the Acting Clerk, and agreed:

1. That the General Assembly agree that the broad issues included in the Memorial of the Armagh Presbytery should be considered.
2. That the General Assembly agree that the broad issues included in the Memorial of the Down Presbytery should be considered.

Business lapsed on Standing Orders (see page)

Intermission

The Assembly engaged in reflective worship.

The sederunt came to a close at 1.08pm, the Moderator leading in prayer.

FIFTH SESSION

Wednesday, 11 June 2025

2.00pm

The Assembly convened, the Moderator leading in prayer.

LISTENING TO THE GLOBAL CHURCH

Rev SA McCracken introduced the presentation highlighting the theme 'One Body, Many Voices' taken from 2 Corinthians 12:12. As followers of Jesus we belong to a global family that spans continents, cultures, and languages. In order to be truly united, the global Church must listen to one another, value one another, and learn from one another.

He then spoke about his recent visit to the General Assembly of the United Mission to Nepal, after which he interviewed Rev William Tembo, General Secretary of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Livingstonia Synod, about the forthcoming 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first Free Church Missionaries and also in regard to the importance of listening to the views of the church's young people - half of the church's membership is under 25 years old.

A video interview was shown, conducted by Dr Heather Clements, with women from Ukraine and Syria focusing on their experiences of living in countries at war. Afterwards, she reflected on her attendance at a conference in April 2025 in Lebanon: *The Unheard Voice: Women's Persevering Witness in War*. Its purpose was that women impacted by conflict would reflect on Christian witness in war, focusing on the themes of reconciliation and hope. It provided a timely reminder never to take peace for granted because it is what some people can only pray for.

Rev WS Marrs interviewed Rev Demianus Ice, Moderator; Rev Ferry Kabarey, Vice Moderator; and Rev Abram Ugu, Secretary, of the Evangelical Christian Church of Halmahera, Indonesia. They spoke of how, despite many challenges in a predominantly Muslim context, the church in Halmahera has more than doubled in size over the past 25 years, much due to the living witness in word and deed by their ministers.

In the final session, Rev Dr C Dickson, Mission Project Leader of the International Meeting Point, interviewed a Nigerian gentleman (name withheld for security purposes) who shared his reflections about adjusting to living in Northern Ireland.

Subsequent to each section, there was a minute of prayerful reflection and, following the final presentation, the Moderator provided a closing reflection, bringing the session to an end with prayer.

The Report of the **RECONFIGURATION COMMITTEE (LINKAGE COMMISSION)** (Reports pp191-192) along with Resolutions 3-9 (Reports pp292-293) was submitted by the Rev Dr TD Allen:

Moved by the Rev Dr TD Allen, seconded by the Rev RK Graham, and agreed:

3. That the congregation of Townhill, Portglenone be merged into the congregation of First Portglenone on 31 December 2025, or other suitable date, on Terms set by the Linkage Commission.
4. That the congregation of Croaghmore be merged into the congregation of Toberkeigh on 31 December 2025, or other suitable date, on Terms set by the Linkage Commission.
5. That the congregation of Ballynahatty & Creevan be merged into the congregation of Fintona on 31 December 2025, or other suitable date, on Terms set by the Linkage Commission.
6. That the congregation of Newington be merged into the Presbytery of North Belfast on 31 December 2025, or other suitable date, on Terms set by the Linkage Commission.
7. That the congregation of Taughmonagh be merged into the Presbytery of South Belfast on 31 December 2025, or other suitable date, on Terms set by the Linkage Commission.
8. That the congregation of Killala be dissolved on 31 December 2025, or other suitable date, on Terms set by the Linkage Commission. That the assets realised be distributed according to the rules.
9. That the Report of the Reconfiguration Committee of the Linkage Commission be received.

Intermission

INSTALLATION OF MODERATOR

The Right Rev Dr RM Murray, Moderator of the General Assembly, welcomed all present.

The Moderator led in public worship, expressing thanks for the help he had received during his year in office.

The Moderator asked the Assembly to proceed to the election and appointment of a successor to him in office for the ensuing year.

The Acting Clerk submitted the nominations of Presbyteries for the Moderatorship as follows:

The Rev Dr Trevor David Gribben	16 nominations
The Rev Richard Cameron Kerr	3 nominations

On the motion of the Acting Clerk, the Rev Dr TD Allen, seconded by the Deputy Clerk, the Rev EP Gamble, the Rev Dr TD Gribben was unanimously called to the Chair, welcomed by the retiring Moderator and commended to God in prayer.

The Right Rev Dr TD Gribben addressed the House.

The sederunt came to a close at 5.45pm, the Moderator pronouncing the Benediction.

SIXTH SESSION

Wednesday, 11 June 2025

7.30pm

The Assembly convened, the Moderator leading in prayer.

Mr Wilson Beare, Chief Executive of the Bible Society in Northern Ireland, addressed the House, and, on behalf of that Society, and of the National Bible Society of Ireland, presented the Moderator with a copy of the Scriptures. The Moderator suitably replied.

The Report of the **COUNCIL FOR MISSION IN IRELAND** (Reports pp229-269) along with Resolutions 1-6 (Reports p294) was submitted by the Rev Dr BJ Walker, along with the following Supplementary Report (pS8):

1. **Healthcare Chaplaincy** (p.241)
Spelling of Chaplain to Altnagelvin Hospital should be ‘Rev Ross Kernohan’ not ‘Rev Ross Kernoghan’.

DAVID ALLEN

Moved by the Rev Dr BJ Walker, seconded by Mr RW Hill, and agreed:

1. That the “Church Planting – The Next Decade” report be received and its recommendations adopted, with affirmation of the vision for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to pray for and commit towards seeing at least 10 fully constituted new congregations and at least 10 more church planting projects in the next 10 years.
2. That the General Assembly welcome the “Mission as a Minority” report and approves its recommendations.
3. That the General Assembly note the exit of the congregation of Kilkenny from the Home Mission Development Scheme on 30 June 2025.
4. That the report entitled “Chaplaincy: A Ministry of Presence” be received and the Council be encouraged in the outworking of its recommendations.
5. That the General Assembly give thanks for the work of all our Healthcare, Forces, Prisons, Rural and University Chaplains, recognising their call to this special area of ministry and service.

The Moderator led the House in prayer for chaplains as referenced in Resolution 5.

Moved by the Rev Dr BJ Walker, seconded by Mr RW Hill, and agreed:

6. That the Report of the Council for Mission in Ireland be received.

MEMORIALS – debate resumed (see page)

Moved by the Very Rev Dr DJ Bruce, seconded by the Rev Dr TD Allen:

3. That the General Assembly agree that the broad issues contained in the Memorials of the Armagh and Down Presbyteries should be considered together by an Ad-Hoc Panel – this to include the consideration of what is meant by ordination and the offices to which ordination should apply within PCI, including the role of any such ordained office.

Moved as an amendment by the Rev Jonathan Boyd, seconded by the Rev PWA McClelland:

3. That the issues contained in the Memorial of the Armagh Presbytery be considered by the Doctrine Committee and that the issues contained in the Memorial of the Down Presbytery be considered by an Ad-Hoc Panel.

Under Standing Orders business would lapse at this point. The House gave permission for business to continue until 9.15pm.

On being put to the House, the amendment was declared lost.

On being put to the House, the substantive motion was declared passed.

Moved by the Very Rev Dr DJ Bruce, seconded by the Rev Dr TD Allen:

4. That the Ad-Hoc Panel regarding the Memorials of the Armagh and Down Presbyteries should consist of:

- Moderator and Clerk of Assembly; General Council Convener
- Rev Dr Ben Walker (Convener)
- Three members of the Doctrine Committee (nominated by its Convener)
- Two members of the Council for Training in Ministry (nominated by its Business Committee)
- Two members of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness (nominated by its Coordination Committee)
- Two members of the Council for Mission in Ireland (nominated by its Business Panel)
- Up to two additional members (if necessary for balance,

nominated by the Convener of the General Council

The amendment to Resolution 4 was withdrawn.

On being put to the House, the substantive motion was declared passed.

Resolution 5: “Up to two additional members (if necessary for balance, nominated by the Convener of the General Council)” was deleted as a formatting error in the Reports had separated the wording from the end of Resolution 4 (q.v.).

Business lapsed on Standing Orders (see page)

The sederunt came to a close at 9.15pm, the Moderator leading in prayer.

SEVENTH SESSION

Thursday, 12 June 2025

10.00am

The Assembly again convened, the Moderator leading in prayer.

In Private

The Report of the **JUDICIAL COMMISSION** (Reports pp270-272) along with Resolutions 1 -2 (Reports p294), together with the Confidential Supplementary Report Section 1 (Confidential Supplementary Report Booklet pp1-9), was submitted by the Rev NAL Cameron:

Moved by the Rev NAL Cameron, seconded by the Rev TJ Stothers, and agreed:

1. That the General Assembly authorise the publication of the 2026 Book of the Constitution and Government of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (The Code), replacing the previous 1980 Book of the Constitution and Government of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (The Code), and effective from 1 January 2026.
2. That the Report of the Judicial Commission be received.

The Report of the **SPECIAL COMMISSION** (Reports p273) along with Resolution 1 (Reports p295), together with a verbal report, was submitted by the Rev NAL Cameron:

Moved by the Rev NAL Cameron, seconded by the Rev TJ Stothers, and agreed:

1. That the report of the Special Commission be received.

The Report of the **COMMISSION ON APPLICATIONS** (Reports p274) along with Resolution 1 (Reports p295), was submitted by the Rev NAL Cameron:

Moved by the Rev NAL Cameron, seconded by the Rev TJ Stothers, and agreed:

1. That the Report of the Commission on Applications be received.

The Report of the **COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY** (Reports pp275-284) along with Resolutions 1-5 (Reports pp295-296), together with

the following Supplementary Report (pS8) was submitted by the Rev Andrew Faulkner:

Resolution 4, on p296, is withdrawn.

Moved by the Rev Andrew Faulkner, seconded by the Rev WE Chestnutt, and agreed:

1. That the following applicants, 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:

Applicant	Presbytery
Stuart Balmer	Ards
Calum Coert	Armagh
David Graham	Dromore
Applicant	Presbytery
Adam Hanna	Newry
Peter Hutchinson	Armagh
Matthew Jackson	Down
Philipp Jaeschke	South Belfast
Josh McCracken	East Belfast
Scott Monteith	East Belfast
Ross Murphy	Dromore
Adam Wallace	Coleraine and Limavady
Wesley Quinn	Route

2. That the following pathways be approved:

(a) Calum Coert

- (i) Follow the regular ministry training pathway
- (ii) Be recommended to apply for the MDiv at UTC
- (iii) Any exemptions from CTM modules will be agreed after consultation with the UTC Faculty and the Convener of the Ministerial Studies and Development Committee
- (iv) Complete the normal student summer placements and a 26-month full-time licentiateship.

(b) Adam Hanna

- (i) Be recommended to apply for an MTh in Reformed Theology (over three years of study)
- (ii) Complete the remaining CTM modules in order to satisfy General Assembly requirements:
 - Irish Church History

- Hebrew
- Theology for Ministry (audit)
- Homiletics 2
- Leading Worship
- Pastoral Care and Reflective Practice 1 and 2
- Missional Church
- Leadership
- Presentation Skills
- Interpersonal Skills

(iii) Complete the regular student summer placements and a 26-month full-time licentiateship.

3. That permission be granted to Stuart Balmer and Peter Hutchinson to study at Westminster Theological Seminary on the following terms:
 - (a) Completion of two 12-week student summer placements in Ireland in the summers of 2026 and 2028.
 - (b) Supply the Dean of Ministerial Studies and Development with a statement of the classes proposed to be taken during the following session and receive the consent of the Council. These statements must reach the DMSD not later than the 1 September in any year (Code Par.217.7(a)).
 - (c) Supply a statement that records academic scores and transcripts to the DMSD at the end of each academic year.
 - (d) Return to complete a course of study at Union Theological College for one year (Code Par.217(7)(b) and 217(8)). Concurrent with this, complete a student placement year.
 - (e) Complete a normal 26-month full-time licentiateship.
 - (f) Report any bursaries received to the Convener of the Students' Bursary Fund, in order that appropriate reductions might be made.

Resolution 4 was withdrawn (See p.S8).

5. That permission be given to Adam Wallace to defer the commencement of his studies.

The Report of the **GENERAL ASSEMBLY STRUCTURES AND RESOURCES REVIEW PANEL (General Council Section 1) resumed**; the Confidential Supplementary Report Section 2, part A and additional Resolutions 1-3 (Confidential Supplementary Report Booklet pp.10-14) were submitted by the Rev Dr TD Allen:

Moved by the Rev Dr TD Allen, seconded by the Very Rev Dr JA Kirkpatrick, and agreed:

1. That the General Assembly authorise a detailed exploration of a partnership between the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Belfast Buildings Trust, to achieve the reconfiguration and refurbishment of the Union Theological College Buildings in a manner that protects the ethos and interests of both bodies.
2. That, in parallel, the General Assembly Structures and Resources Review Panel be instructed to examine the General Assembly's current vision for Union Theological College (see paragraph 8 of the above report), in the light of the Panel's overall work.
3. That the General Assembly Structures and Resources Review Panel be instructed to report to the General Council on both of the pieces of work outlined in Resolutions 1 and 2 above, with a subsequent report and recommendations being brought to the General Assembly for decision, with the Moderator, if deemed necessary, being requested to call a Special Meeting of the General Assembly.

The Report of the **GENERAL ASSEMBLY STRUCTURES AND RESOURCES REVIEW PANEL (General Council Section 1) resumed**; the Confidential Supplementary Report Section 2, part B and additional Resolutions 4-6 (Confidential Supplementary Report Booklet pp14-17) were submitted by the Very Rev Dr DJ Bruce.

Mr Dermot Parsons, Secretary to the Council for Social Witness, whose attendance was considered desirable for the business of the court (Code Par.98), was given permission to attend for this item in the Private Session and to sit and deliberate.

Moved by the Very Rev Dr DJ Bruce, seconded by the Rev DW Brice, and agreed:

4. That the General Assembly authorise a detailed exploration of a more 'fit for purpose' governance and management structure for the residential services currently provided under the Council for Social Witness, as outlined in paragraph 4 of the above report.
5. That in parallel, the General Assembly instruct the General Assembly Structures and Resources Review Panel to examine the General Assembly's current vision for the provision and scope of residential social care services in the light of the Panel's overall work.

6. That the General Assembly Structures and Resources Review Panel be instructed to report to the General Council on both of the pieces of work outlined in Resolutions 4 and 5 above, with a subsequent report and recommendations being brought to the General Assembly for decision, with the Moderator, if deemed necessary, being requested to call a Special Meeting of the General Assembly.

In Public

The Report of the **COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY resumed**, having previously been submitted by the Rev Andrew Faulkner, along with the following Supplementary Reports (ppS8&10):

1. **Dean of Ministerial Studies & Development**

The Call of Rev David Leach to Portrush from his role as Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry created a vacancy in Union Theological College staffing. Following an interview process, the Council called Rev Gordon Best, Minister of Newmills, Iveagh, to the role of Dean of Ministerial Studies and Development, at its meeting on 4 June 2025. This is a three-year, fixed term post. It is anticipated that he will commence responsibilities on 1 September 2025.

RECEPTION OF MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES COMMITTEE

1. The Committee has met once since the report went to print.

Transferring Ministers

2. Mr Andrew Gibson, a Licentiate of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) residing in Charlotte, North Carolina, was interviewed in May 2025 and received as a Transferring Licentiate. He will begin a 36-month assistantship when a suitable placement is found.
3. Rev Ahenkora Kwakye, an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, was interviewed in May 2025 and not accepted as a transferring minister into the PCI.

4. Dr Stephen Moore, originally from Northern Ireland, theologically trained at Oak Hill College, London and currently teaching in Union College, was granted eligibility for a call from 1 June 2025.

LACHLAN WEBSTER

Moved by the Rev Andrew Faulkner, seconded by the Rev Principal Michael McClenahan, and agreed:

6. That the assessment for the Students' Bursary Fund be set to raise £450,000.

The Moderator noted that the name of a student should be added to the Schedule of Students (Reports, Appendix 1, p284), viz.: Glen McBride, Newry Presbytery.

7. That the Report of the Council for Training in Ministry be received.
LINKAGE COMMISSION – debate resumed (see page [redacted])

The Report of the **LINKAGE COMMISSION** (Reports pp183-196) along with Resolutions 1-2 (Reports p.292) was formally submitted by the Acting Clerk, together with the following Supplementary Report, and Additional Resolutions 2(a) (ppS6-S7), and licenced Additional Resolution 2(b):

1. **Dissolution of Linkage** (Reports p187):
The Linkage between Kells and Eskylane was dissolved on 25 February 2025.
2. At the April meeting of the Linkage Commission, the following resolution was passed to be included in the business of the General Assembly in June 2025:

That the General Assembly set up a small commission to deal with exceptional cases of review of a presbytery decision on reconfiguration, for a period of three years in the first instance; and permission be granted to the office bearers of the Linkage Commission to bring forth names to serve on this Review Commission.

The names are: Moderator, Clerk, Dr Brian Craig, Very Rev Dr William Henry, Rev Robert Herron, Very Rev Dr Sam Mawhinney.

A Resolution to this effect is appended as **Resolution (2a)**.

3. Under the Reviews, Fees & Allowances report, the following error is corrected:

‘The congregation of High Street, Holywood be placed under East Belfast and not Ards.’

4. The 2024 General Assembly passed the resolution “*that the congregation of Second Newtownards be merged into the congregation of First Newtownards on 31 December 2024, or other suitable date on terms set by the Linkage Commission.*”

At the meeting of the Linkage Commission on 27 May 2025, the following terms of merger were agreed by the Commission:

- (i) That the congregation of Second Newtownards be merged into the congregation of First Newtownards on 31 December 2024, or other suitable date under the name “First Newtownards”.
- (ii) That the property known as Second Newtownards Manse become and remain the property of the merged congregation of First Newtownards.
- (iii) That the number one bank account of Second Newtownards be split as follows: £10,000 to First Newtownards and the remainder to the Council for Mission in Ireland.
- (iv) That all other assets of the charity that is Second Newtownards, including property or lands not disposed of, shall become the property of First Newtownards and transfer with immediate effect to the Council for Mission in Ireland to be used in mission in the Presbytery of Ards or its successor.
- (v) That the merged congregation will remain responsible for any future Second Newtownards liabilities and receive any legacies and bequests subsequent to merger.
- (vi) That First Newtownards draw up a list of the fixtures and fittings of Second Newtownards, and dispose of them taking into account the identity and legacy of Second Newtownards.
- (vii) That the Stipend of the merged congregation be £43,500 (2025).
- (viii) That the minister lives in First Newtownards Manse.

Additional Resolution

- 2(a) That the General Assembly set up a Review Commission, to deal with exceptional cases of review of a presbytery decision on reconfiguration, for a period of three years in the first instance; and that the Commission consist of:

Moderator, Clerk, Dr Brian Craig, Very Rev Dr William Henry, Rev Robert Herron, Very Rev Dr Sam Mawhinney.

Additional Resolution (licensed by the office-bearers of the General Assembly Business Committee)

- 2(b) That the congregation of Townsend Street be merged with the General Assembly on 31 December 2025, or other suitable date, on Terms agreed by the Linkage Commission.

KER GRAHAM

Moved by the Acting Clerk, seconded by the Deputy Clerk, and agreed:

1. That the revised bounds for the congregation of Mersey Street, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved.
2. That the Report of the Linkage Commission, with the exception of the report of Mergers, and the Reconfiguration Committee, be received.
 - 2(a). That the General Assembly set up a Review Commission, to deal with exceptional cases of review of a presbytery decision on reconfiguration, for a period of three years in the first instance; and that the Commission consist of:
Moderator, Clerk, Dr Brian Craig, Very Rev Dr William Henry, Rev Robert Herron, Very Rev Dr Sam Mawhinney.
 - 2(b). That the congregation of Townsend Street be merged with the General Assembly on 31 December 2025, or other suitable date, on Terms agreed by the Linkage Commission.

The Report of the **COUNCIL FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS** (Reports pp197-216) along with Resolutions 1-2 (Reports p293) was formally submitted by the Acting Clerk.

Moved by the Acting Clerk, seconded by the Deputy Clerk, and agreed:

1. That the General Assembly encourage congregations to engage with the Present initiative in the year ahead in whatever way seems most suitable to them and to harness the potential it offers to envision and enable the development of their life and witness.
2. That the Report of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness be received.

The Report of the **COUNCIL FOR GLOBAL MISSION** (Reports pp217-228) along with Resolutions 1-5 (Reports pp293-294) was formally submitted by the Acting Clerk.

Moved by the Acting Clerk, seconded by the Deputy Clerk, and agreed:

1. That the General Assembly give thanks for the dedicated witness and sacrificial service of PCI's global mission workers and encourage the Council to prayerfully reflect on its strategy for resourcing mission engagement, in particular the sending of global mission workers.
2. That the General Assembly give thanks to God for the opportunity to partner in mission with churches, institutions and agencies around the world and commit to pray, especially for those enduring the ongoing impact of war, civil unrest and displacement, and living as persecuted minorities.
3. That the General Assembly give thanks to God for the generosity of congregations and members of PCI in support of the World Development Appeal 2024 and commend the 2025 World Development Appeal to the whole Church.
4. Standing in solidarity with PCI's partners, and recognising the devastating impact on some of the world's poorest people who are least well able to absorb any reduction in aid, the General Assembly call on the UK Government to restore their commitment to international aid spending of 0.7% of Gross National Income.
5. That the report of the Council for Global Mission be received.

The Moderator led the House in prayer.

Section 4 of the report of the **GENERAL COUNCIL** (Reports pp101-113) along with Resolutions 26-27 (Reports p289), was submitted by the Rev Dr TD Allen, along with the addition of paragraph (f) to Resolution 26:

Addition to Resolution 26

- (f) the resignation of Rev Robert Bell as Co-convenor of the Chaplaincy Committee, that he be thanked for his services, and Rev Craig Lynn move from being Co-convenor, to Convenor of the Committee.

The Final Report of the **GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE**, was submitted by the Rev RMcM Mackay as follows:

Final Report of the General Assembly Business Committee

1. The General Assembly Business Committee met at lunchtime on Wednesday, 11 June, 2025 to consider an amendment which had been received for the Private Session on Thursday morning, 13 June. The Acting Clerk reported on the matter at the Private Session on Thursday at 10.00am.

2. The Business Committee agreed the Final Report of the Business Committee to the Assembly consisting of the following three Resolutions:
 - (a) That the Acting Clerk be given authority to finalise and make corrections to the Minutes as required.
 - (b) That the next General Assembly be held in Belfast on Tuesday, 9 June 2026, or if necessary on another suitable date that month as agreed by the General Council on the recommendation of the General Assembly Business Committee.
 - (c) That the Final Report of the General Assembly Business Committee be received.

ROY MACKAY, Convener
DAVID ALLEN, Acting Clerk of Assembly

Moved by the Rev Dr TD Allen, seconded by the Rev RMcM Mackay, and agreed:

Nominations Committee

26. That the following resignations be accepted, and appointments made:
 - (a) the resignation of Mr David Thomson as Convener of the Support Service Committee [under General Council], that he be thanked for his services, and that Mr Hugo Wilson be appointed in his place.
 - (b) the resignation of Rev Stephen Richmond as Convener of the Congregational Witness Committee, that he be thanked for his services, and that Rev Jonny McKane be appointed in his place.
 - (c) the resignation of Rev Jane Nelson as Convener of the Programme, Finance and Coordination Committee [under CCLW], that she be thanked for her services, and that Mr Colin Neill be appointed in her place.
 - (d) the resignation of Rev Philip McCrea as Convener of the Congregational Life Committee, that he be thanked for his services, and that Rev James Rogers be appointed in his place.
 - (e) the resignation of Rev Stephen Lowry as Convener of the Disability Services Committee, that he be thanked for his services, and that Mrs Joyce Anderson be appointed in his place.

- (f) the resignation of Rev Robert Bell as Co-convener of the Chaplaincy Committee, that he be thanked for his services, and Rev Craig Lynn move from being Co-convener, to Convener of the Committee.
27. That the Acting Clerk be given authority to finalise and make corrections to the Minutes as required.
 28. That the next General Assembly be held in Belfast on Tuesday, 9 June 2026, or if necessary, on another suitable date that month as agreed by the General Council on the recommendation of the General Assembly Business Committee.
 29. That Section 4 of the General Council Report, including the Final Report of the General Assembly Business Committee, be received.

The Moderator welcomed the retiring Conveners, Mr David Thomson, Revs Jane Nelson, Philip McCrea, Stephen Lowry and Robert Bell to the platform. He thanked them, and Rev Stephen Richmond, who was not able to be present, for their service. He then welcomed the incoming Conveners and thanked them for taking on these responsibilities.

The Moderator thanked: Miss Susan Hamilton and the staff of the General Secretary's Department; Mr Raymond Robinson and all conferencing and reception staff; Mr Mark Neale and the staff in the Communications Department; Mr Ed Connolly (Presentations), Mr Mark Smith (Press Officer); Mr Steve McMurray, Mr John Willis and their teams (IT, audio, streaming); members of staff in Assembly Buildings; Mrs Florence McNeely (Accommodation Coordination); Mrs Avril Crawford (Catering Coordination) and Alex Millar (Catering); Mr Dave Whitcroft and musicians and singers; the stewards from the Belfast City Mission and others; the timekeepers; the Rev Mervyn Burnside (Arrangements Panel Convener) and the Rev Roy Mackay (General Assembly Business Committee Convener); his Chaplains; the Rev Dr David Allen (Acting Clerk); the Rev Peter Gamble (Deputy Clerk); and the Rev Jim Stothers.

Intermission

Members of Assembly participated in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, conducted by the Moderator. During worship the Memorial Roll of Ministers deceased since the 2024 meeting of the General Assembly was submitted by the Rev TJ Stothers, and the Assembly paid their customary tribute.

CLOSE OF ASSEMBLY

The Moderator declared the Assembly to be dissolved and convened the next Stated General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to meet in Belfast, on Tuesday 9 June 2026 or, if necessary, on another suitable date that month.

The Moderator pronounced the Benediction.

The sederunt came to a close at 2.10pm.

Attested by
T DAVID ALLEN
Acting Clerk of Assembly