



## SYNOD REPORTS

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# General Synod of the Church of Ireland

May 2022

CATE TURNER  
Member of Synod

### INTRODUCTION

The Church of Ireland Synod took place in person from Wednesday 4th to Friday 6th May 2022 in the Spires Conference Centre, Belfast. It was the second meeting of the triennium, but having met by electronic communication technology the previous year it was for many their first experience of General Synod in person.

### BUSINESS

The business of Synod was lighter this year, but it was enhanced by the return to in-person debate. There were two bills before Synod; one dealt with electronic meetings and one related to Parochial Nominators.

### ELECTRONIC MEETINGS

One bill made amendments to the Constitution deemed necessary by the years of the pandemic. It provided for meetings of General Synod of the Church of Ireland, Diocesan Synods and General Vestries to have the flexibility to meet wholly or partly by electronic means. There was also a motion passed which tidied up the wording in various places to reflect these new ways of working.

### PAROCHIAL NOMINATORS

The second bill closed a loophole so that it is no longer possible for a person to be a Parochial Nominator for a parish unless that person is a registered vestryperson for that Parish.

### MORAVIAN CHURCH

General Synod also recognised that, following a number of years of careful conversations, conditions now exist for the implementation of arrangements

providing for interchangeability of ministry with the Moravian Church. Synod empowered the Standing Committee to take steps to set up the necessary reference group. (The Moravian Province of Britain and Ireland subsequently and unanimously endorsed the interchangeability proposals at their own synod in Swanwick in July.)

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## General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

May 2022

JASON LINGIAH

Minister, St Andrew's United Free Church of Scotland, Bellshill; Convener of the Church and Society Committee

### INTRODUCTION

The General Assembly of the Church again met in a 'blended' form, based from the Assembly Hall. The Moderator of the General Assembly this year was the Rev'd Dr Iain Greenshields, BD PhD, Minister of Dunfermline St Margaret's, Presbytery of Fife. Last year's Moderator was an Elder, rather than a Minister: Lord Wallace of Tankerness, PC QC FRSE. Lord Hodge, Deputy President of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, was Her Late Majesty The Queen's personal representative to the Assembly as Lord High Commissioner. A brief synopsis of Assembly Business follows.

### THE NEW PRINCIPAL CLERK

The Rev'd Fiona Smith, LLB BD, Minister of Inverness: Ness Bank, was appointed as Principal Clerk of the General Assembly, taking her oath at the Assembly. She took over from the Rev'd Dr George Whyte and she is one of only 40 Principal Clerks of Assembly since the post was created in 1572, and the first woman to hold the position. She will be the secretary of the Legal Questions Committee and the Assembly Business Committee and represent the Church in a number of areas of public life.

### SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

The General Assembly voted by 274 votes to 136 to change a standing church law to allow ministers and ordained deacons to apply to become authorised