

# Minutes of Conference

## 2023



THE METHODIST CHURCH  
IN IRELAND

# METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND

## Minutes of Conference & Directory 2023

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# MINUTES

of the

TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY FOURTH  
(Two Hundred and Forty-Second Annual)

# CONFERENCE

of the people called Methodists

in the Connexion established by  
THE LATE REV JOHN WESLEY, AM

ON THURSDAY 8 JUNE

**2023**

## MINISTERIAL SESSION

REV DAVID H NIXON, BTh, MA, President of the Conference and President of the Methodist Church in Ireland

REV HEATHER M E MORRIS, BSc, BD, PhD, Secretary of the Conference

REV ALAN G WARDLOW, BA, Senior Assistant Secretary

REV COLIN D GRACIE, BA, MA, MDiv, Editorial Secretary

REV RUTH E PATTERSON, BTh, Journal Secretary

REV KENNETH CONNOR, FdA, BA, Letter Writer

**1. MINISTERS NOW RECEIVED INTO FULL CONNEXION WITH THE CONFERENCE**

Susan Gallagher  
Tanita Lee  
Leah McKibben  
Peter K Morris  
Philip W J Patterson

**2. PROBATIONERS REMAINING ON TRIAL**

John McNair  
R E Richard Wright (NS)

**3. RECEIVED AS PROBATIONERS**

Fadzanayi Jongoro  
Andrew Topley

**4. APPOINTED FOR INITIAL TRAINING AND FORMATION**

Cheryl Bruce  
Jennifer M Gault  
Norman R A Henry  
Ruth E Mathews  
Jacqueline E Whittle  
for a second year  
Julie Craythorne  
Brian Donaghy  
for a first year

**5. ANNUAL ENQUIRY CONCERNING THE CHARACTER AND EFFICIENCY OF MINISTERS AND PROBATIONERS**

They were examined one by one.

**6. MINISTERS RETIRING**

George Abbs  
Harold M Agnew  
Gary J Mason  
T H Samuel McGuffin  
Gary D Millar

**7. MINISTERS OF OTHER CONFERENCES SERVING IN IRELAND**

Daniel Randal, BA, MDiv (United Methodist Church)  
R Andrew Robinson, BTh, BA (Methodist Church of Southern Africa)  
Marlene Skuce (Deacon) (Methodist Church in Britain)  
Tawanda Sungai, BA, BD (Methodist Church in Zimbabwe)

**8. PERMISSION TO SERVE WITH OTHER CONFERENCES**

John W Purdy, BD (Methodist Church in Britain)

**9. CEASED TO BE RECOGNISED AS MINISTERS AMONGST US**

Their names are recorded in the Journal of the Conference.

# Obituaries

**Robert George Bagnall, BA, BD**, who was born in Tullamore on 3rd March 1924, the son of Edward and Frances Bagnall. He worked on the home farm and in business before hearing the call to ordained ministry. He served as a circuit evangelist and pre-collegiate probationer in Churchill, Fivemiletown and Belfast Central Mission before going to Edgehill Theological College. His service was marked by a deep pastoral concern, lasting friendships and a disciplined approach to academic study. After theological training and ordination in 1950, he was appointed to Sandy Row, (Primitive Street) and then Portadown, where pastoral care and collegueship were central to his ministry. In 1955, he married Ann Alford who contributed immensely to his ministry. They had three children: Niall, Colin and Ruth. He was appointed as Chaplain of Methodist College, Belfast in 1959. He made a very significant contribution in the field of religious education, serving on the group which produced the Northern Ireland secondary schools' curriculum and examinations in religious education which proved to be far sighted and inclusive. He contributed to many other areas of community life, including the Northern Ireland Interfaith Forum and the bereavement counselling service, Cruse. He retired in 1986 after 27 years in Methodist College and was very active in the Ballyholme church and local community. He was a gifted teacher who wore his scholarship with humility, writing regularly for the Irish Christian Advocate and articles for religious education journals. He taught a successful philosophy class in the University of the Third Age. He was Father of the Conference for many years. Cared for by Ann and his family, he died peacefully at home, on 30th July 2022 in the ninety-ninth year of his age and the seventy-third of his ministry. He donated his body to medical science.

**William Winston Graham** who was born on 17th June 1942 in Portadown, the son of the Rev Moore and Mrs Hyacinth Graham. Upon successfully candidating for ordained ministry, he was stationed as a pre-collegiate probationer in Fivemiletown. While a student, in 1966, he went to lead a Children's Day Service in Lisburn where he met Blanche Gibson. Their marriage was a deep, mutual and supportive relationship in the service of God and the Church. They had three children Laurence, Christine and Kathryn. Despite the heavy demands of ministry, they had a happy positive home and family life. After serving in Bray, they went to Kingsmead College, Selly Oak, to prepare for an appointment in Sri Lanka, where he served in Jaffna and Nuwara Eliya. He was ordained in Colombo in 1969 by the Revs Dr DT Niles and George Good, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland. On his return to Ireland, his Circuit appointments included Birr, Dunkineely and Ardara, Portrush

and Portstewart, Glengormley, Ballynahinch and Knock. His administrative ability came to the fore as Ministerial Treasurer of MMS(I) and during his nine years as team leader of the World Church Team at Mission House, London. He was appointed Secretary of Conference in 2004 and was elected President of the Methodist Church in Ireland in 2002. He was an excellent pastor and preacher, gifted in music and with people. He exercised a gracious ministry of prayer for healing, especially during his retirement years. He led many to faith and deeper commitment to our Lord and was loved and appreciated in all his appointments. His spiritual life was a humble and intimate walk with the risen Christ. He died on 8th September, 2022 in the eighty-first year of his age and the fifty-seventh of his ministry. His body was laid to rest in Movilla Cemetery, Newtownards.

**Norman Wilson Taggart, BA, BD, PhD**, who was born in Belfast on 31st October 1935. He attended, first, Woodvale and later Donegall Square Methodist Church, where the Embury-Heck window behind the pulpit with its depiction of Christ's calling to go and teach all nations, captured his young life. 'Wherever you sat', he said, 'it felt as if Jesus's eyes were on you as he gave the great commission'. This led to a consecrated commitment to the world Church and world mission, where he was a preacher, lecturer, historian, and statesman. He was educated at Royal Belfast Academical Institution and Queen's University Belfast before attending Edgehill Theological College. His ministry was fully shared by his wife Margaret, whom he met when she was sixteen and he seventeen and were married eight years later in 1960. They had four children, Grace, Patrick, Sam and Sarah. Ordained a presbyter in the Church of South India in 1963, he and Margaret spent twenty-four years serving the world church, including five years at the World Church Office in London and seventeen years in Ireland. He served in the Medak Diocese of South India and later Kollupitiya, Sri Lanka, Sligo, Greenisland, Belfast Central Mission, Cavehill, and Coleraine. During his years in Ireland, he served as Chair of the Belfast District and Organising Secretary of the Irish Council of Churches. He was a founding sponsor of the Columbanus Community of Reconciliation, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland in 1997 and part-time lecturer at Edgehill and Union Theological Colleges. He was, in addition, a contributor to the Methodist Missionary Project and a prolific author with three major titles - a biography of William Arthur, and two volumes on the history of the Irish Methodist contribution to world mission. He died on 10th December 2022 in the eighty-eighth year of his age and the sixty-third of his ministry. His body was laid to rest in Middle Churchyard, Ballinderry.

**Christopher Gilling Walpole**, who was born in Skerries, Co Dublin on 18th August 1929. His parents were members of the Quaker community. Later, the family lived in Warrenpoint, where they joined the Methodist Church, and in the Ards peninsula. He attended Newry Model and Intermediate Schools and came to faith during a mission in Glastry Church. His father's death necessitated a further family move to Belfast where he became active in Ballynafeigh Church and worked in office administration for several years. After a year as Circuit Evangelist in Portrush, he was accepted as a candidate in 1956 and sent to Fivemiletown as a pre-collegiate probationer. Following training in Edgehill Theological College, he served in the following circuits: Belfast Central Mission, Birr, Sandy Row (Primitive Street), Cavehill, Dublin South, Dublin Centenary and Upper Erne. He married Rosemary Ludlow in 1962 but sadly she died the year after their son, John, was born. In 1967 he married Betty Forsyth and they had one daughter, Dorothy. He served as Secretary of the Belfast Synod and as Chair of the Dublin and Enniskillen and Sligo Districts. For many years he was the Secretary/Treasurer of the Ministers' Medical Fund and served on the Conference Secretarial team for 29 years as Letter Writer, Journal Secretary and Senior Assistant Secretary. He was elected President in 1995. He was quiet, gracious and humble, an efficient administrator, a caring pastor and faithful preacher. His lifelong interests included photography, model railways and cricket. Following retirement in 1997, he and Betty lived in Fermanagh and then in Moira. In each place he fulfilled preaching and pastoral work when required and formed Faith and Friendship interdenominational groups. In 2022 they moved to sheltered accommodation in Dublin. He died in Brabazon Nursing Home on 2nd July 2022 in the ninety-fourth year of his age and the sixty-fourth of his ministry. His body was laid to rest in Roselawn Cemetery, Belfast.

**Ellen Whalley** who was born on 7th January 1937, in Heywood, Bury, Greater Manchester and had an identical twin sister, Elizabeth and a younger sister Ann. Her grandparents were an active part of her upbringing, encouraging attendance at Sunday school and youth groups which became the catalyst for her faith journey. On leaving school, she worked as a GPO telephonist. However, following her call to ministry, she applied to train as a Wesley Deaconess. Her probation was in the North Belfast Mission, serving as Matron during the summer in the Mission's Portrush Holiday Centre for Children. Following ordination as a deaconess in 1963, she returned to work at the North Belfast Mission before taking up a post as field officer with the Mental Health Association for Northern Ireland. In 1969, she resumed work as a deaconess, serving in Belfast Central Mission, London Mission (Hackney) and Portadown, from where she candidated for the Irish Methodist ordained ministry in 1976. She made history in 1978 on becoming the first woman to be ordained in the Methodist Church in Ireland. She served on the Charlemont (Cranagill), Enniskillen, Adare and Ballingrane, Lisbellaw, Maguiresbridge and Tempo and Armagh Circuits. She was



elected Chair of the Midlands and Southern District in 1986 becoming the first female Chair of District in Ireland. Her ministry was characterised by faithful pastoral care, thoughtful preaching, with Christ exalted as Saviour and Lord. Following retirement in 2002, she settled in the Newtownabbey Mission Circuit, Rathcoole, and continued to be active in all aspects of its life. She died on 24th December 2022 in the eighty-sixth year of her age and the forty-sixth of her ministry. Her body was laid to rest in Carnmoney East Cemetery, Newtownabbey, Co Antrim.

**John James Wilson** who was born in Tedeehan, Ballinagh, Co. Cavan on 8th September 1924, where his father owned a twenty-acre farm. The family were members of the local Church of Ireland parish. He began his education at Ballintemple National School and at the age of eleven, he was sent to live with his aunt and uncle in Belfast to complete his education. They were members of the Belfast Central Mission where he gave his life to Christ at the age of thirteen, subsequently becoming a Local Preacher at the age of twenty. He worked as a clerk, first on a local newspaper and then on the Belfast County Down Railway before offering as a candidate for the ordained ministry. He served as a Circuit Evangelist in Newcastle and was appointed as a probationer to Maguiresbridge before training in Edgehill Theological College. He was subsequently appointed to Londonderry City Mission, Carlow, Pettigo, Sligo, Mountpottinger, Maryborough and Portarlinton, Castlederg, Omagh and Fintona, Bailieborough and Ballybay, Donegal and Ballintra, Clonakilty and Skibbereen, Springfield and Churchill. He was Father of the Conference for twenty-five days before his death. Although he never served on many Connexional committees, he had a lifelong interest in their work both at local and connexional level. He lived a simple personal life, not wishing to be a financial burden to his circuits. He was generous in his support of the Church and with his material possessions. He was a lifelong member of the Orange Order. He died on 23rd August 2022 in the ninety-ninth year of his age and the seventy-third year of his ministry. His body was buried in Ballintemple Parish Churchyard, Ballinagh, Co. Cavan.

# Methodist Church in Ireland

## Stations of Ministers and Probationers (2023/2024)

### Introduction

What follows are the Stations for the Methodist Church in Ireland for the 2023-2024 Connexional year. As it is the List of Stations, only ordained ministers who are in Full Connexion and probationer ministers are named. The List is, in effect, one outworking of the fact that ordained ministers are Office Holders, part of an Order of Ministry. It is important to note therefore that many of the Circuits where there are 'lines' and therefore apparent vacancies, are in fact staffed by employees, retired ministers or ministers in training.

### SOUTHERN DISTRICT

**District Superintendent: Andrew J Dougherty**

1. **Dublin South City**, Andrew G Kingston, Yongnam Park.  
TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN, Andrew J Dougherty & Andrew G Kingston, Chaplains.  
Retired Minister: John Parkin.
2. **Dublin Central Mission**, Laurence A M Graham, Tawanda Sungai.
3. **Dublin North**, Ivor N Owens.
4. **Dublin South**, Stephen R Taylor.  
WESLEY COLLEGE, Nigel D Mackey, Chaplain.
5. **Dublin, Sandymount Christ Church**, W Michael Jones (PT).  
The Superintendent is Andrew J Dougherty.
6. **South East Leinster**, David H Nixon, Mark S Forsyth, Fadzanayi Jongoro.  
(The Superintendent of Urban Junction is Andrew J Dougherty).  
SUPERINTENDENT OF THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT: Andrew J Dougherty.  
Retired Ministers: R Donaldson Rodgers, Desmond C Bain, Paul Kingston (C),  
Eric Duncan, E Rosemary Lindsay.
7. **Kilkenny and Carlow**, Katherine M Kehoe.
8. **Waterford**, Sahr J Yambasu.
9. **Portlaoise**, \_\_\_\_\_ . The Superintendent is Denis M Maguire.
10. **North Tipperary**, Denis M Maguire.  
Retired Minister: Thomas M Kingston.
11. **Birr, Athlone and Tullamore**, Nigel E Gill (PT). The Superintendent is Denis M Maguire.

12. **Cork South and Kerry**, R Andrew Robinson, S Alison Gallagher, \_\_\_\_\_.  
Retired Ministers: Geraldine H W Gracie, William D Mullally.
13. **West Cork**, Jeremy Nicoll, Susan Gallagher.
14. **Limerick**, Christ Church, \_\_\_\_\_. The Superintendent is Andrew J Dougherty.
15. **Adare and Ballingrane**, \_\_\_\_\_. The Superintendent is Andrew J Dougherty.

Steven G Foster acts as Chaplain to Gurteen College.

Steven G Foster has permission to serve as a Pioneer Mission Leader in Co Galway.

Stephen Hancock has permission to be without a stationed appointment and to reside in England.

Victoria M Lynch has permission to serve for the present with the Church of Ireland.

Philip R Meadows has permission to serve with Inspire and Asbury Theological Seminary.

R Andrew Robinson is a minister of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

Tawanda Sungai is a minister of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe.

Irene Morrow, a Supernumerary Minister of the Methodist Church in Britain, resides in the Birr, Athlone and Tullamore Circuit.

Deacon Gordon Wallace, a Supernumerary Minister of the Methodist Church in Britain, resides in the West Cork Circuit.

Neville S Wilson, a Supernumerary Minister of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, resides in the Cork South and Kerry Circuit.

## NORTH WESTERN DISTRICT

**District Superintendent: Stephen F Skuce**

16. **Enniskillen**, Gregory J Alexander, Lorna A Dreading.  
Retired Ministers: Robin N McKibben, Maureen Hassard.
17. **Springfield and Church Hill**, \_\_\_\_\_. The Superintendent is Gregory J Alexander.
18. **Lisbellaw, Maguiresbridge and Tempo**, \_\_\_\_\_. The Superintendent is Richard D Rowe.
19. **Upper Erne**, Richard D Rowe.  
Retired Minister: George A Bowes
20. **Fivemiletown**, Clodagh Yambasu (PT). The Superintendent is Mark Liddicoat (PT).
21. **Pettigo and Irvinestown**, \_\_\_\_\_, The Superintendent is John S Beacom.  
Retired Minister: John S Corrie.

22. **Ballinamallard and Trillick**, John S Beacom.
23. **North Connacht and Longford**, Daniel Randall, Christiaan Snell (Church of Ireland Minister) (PT). The Superintendent is Stephen F Skuce.
24. **Londonderry, Inishowen, Limavady and Strabane Mission**, Ruth H Watt (PT), Peter K Morris, Marlene Skuce (Deacon), \_\_\_\_\_. The Superintendent is Stephen F Skuce.  
Paul J Gallucci has permission to serve with The Big House (Ireland).  
Stephen F Skuce is Superintendent of the North West Methodist Mission.  
SUPERINTENDENT OF THE NORTH WESTERN DISTRICT, Stephen F Skuce.  
Retired Minister: Noel A J C Fallows.
25. **Castleberg**, \_\_\_\_\_. The Superintendent is John R Montgomery.
26. **Omagh and Fintona**, Eleanor Hayden, Leah McKibben.
27. **Donegal, Ballintra and Inver**, John R Montgomery.  
Retired Minister: Ian D Henderson.
28. **Dunkineely and Ardara**, Desmond R Davis.  
Retired Minister: Brian D Griffin.
29. **Portadown**, Alan G Wardlow, Darrin J S Thompson, \_\_\_\_\_.  
Retired Ministers: Shaun R F Cleland, Kenneth J Robinson, Clive D Webster.
30. **Newry**, \_\_\_\_\_. The Superintendent is David J Sweeney.  
Retired Ministers: W Graham Hamilton, M Louise Donald.
31. **Dungannon**, William J Newell.
32. **Cookstown and South Derry**, \_\_\_\_\_. The Superintendent is David G Clements.  
Retired Minister: Brian T Sweeney.
33. **Armagh**, Mark Liddicoat (PT).
34. **Aughnacloy and Monaghan**, \_\_\_\_\_. The Superintendent is William J Newell.
35. **Lurgan**, Andrew J T Gibson, Andrew Topley.  
Retired Ministers: J A Maurice Laverty, Thomas C Stevenson, Harold M Agnew.
36. **Glenavy and Moira**, Philip Gallagher.  
Retired Minister: David Mullan. R Kenneth Lindsay.
37. **Tandragee and Richhill**, Nicholas D McKnight, \_\_\_\_\_.  
Retired Minister: Robert T Loney.
38. **Banbridge and Donacloney**, David J Sweeney  
Retired Minister: W Kenneth Bradley.
39. **Cavan Town**, The Superintendent is Stephen F Skuce.

Robin F Toner (NS) works under the direction of the District Superintendent.

John W Purdy has permission to serve with the Methodist Church in Britain.

Deacon Marlene Skuce is a minister of the Methodist Church in Britain.

Daniel Randall is a minister of the United Methodist Church.

Courtney Randall, a minister of the United Methodist Church resides on the North Connacht and Longford Circuit.

W Gerald Beattie, a Supernumerary Minister of the Methodist Church in Britain, resides in the Banbridge and Donacloney Circuit.

## **NORTH EASTERN DISTRICT**

**District Superintendent: W Philip Agnew**

40. **Coleraine, Portrush, Portstewart and Ballymoney**, Samuel J Livingstone.  
The Superintendent is Ruth E Patterson.  
Retired Ministers: J Brownlee Glenn, Mervyn H Kilpatrick, John M Sweeney,  
J Norman Cardwell, T H Samuel McGuffin.
41. **Newtownabbey Mission** (incorporating the North Belfast Mission), Karen J Spence,  
Pauline M Lorimer, Samuel R Campbell, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ (Church  
of Ireland).  
Retired Ministers: R Ivan McElhinney, John R J Moore, Peter D Murray, Stephen  
Sheerin.
42. **Ballyclare**, Christopher B Skillen.  
Retired Ministers: M Elizabeth Hewitt, S Desmond Curran.
43. **Carrickfergus**, Stephen E Woods, Edem Dzun, \_\_\_\_\_.  
Retired Ministers: Derek Russell, James A Lemon, Samuel F Clements, Andrew N  
Boucher, J Brett Barnhill, Frederick L Munce, Gary D Millar.
44. **Larne**, Julian I Hamilton.  
Retired Minister: J Henry F Keys.
45. **Antrim**, Mark A E Durrell. The Superintendent is Ruth E Patterson.  
Retired Minister: Michael R Gregory.
46. **Ballymena**, Ruth E Patterson.
47. **Cullybackey**, David G Clements.  
Retired Ministers: W Brian Fletcher, Christopher C Fraser.
48. **Belfast North**, Alan W Lorimer, Alan Conly, Daphne Hanna.  
Retired Ministers: J Trevor Jamieson, Brenda W Weatherill.

49. **Belfast South and Central** (including Belfast Central Mission), David A Campton, Emily A Hyland (who shall act as Honorary Chaplain to Methodist College), E June Parke (PT).  
 QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY (Church of the Resurrection) Danielle McCullagh (Church of Ireland Minister).  
 GENERAL SECRETARY AND SECRETARY OF THE CONFERENCE AND OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND, Heather M E Morris, who is Secretary of the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland.  
 DIRECTOR OF THE MINISTRIES TEAM, Janet M Unsworth.  
 METHODIST COLLEGE, \_\_\_\_\_, Chaplain.  
 Andrew Irvine (NS) works as a Pioneer Mission Leader.  
 Retired Ministers: William L Alford, William J Lavery.
50. **Belfast Ballynafeigh, Belvoir, Cairnshill and Knockbreda**, John D Alderdice, Tanita Lee.  
 SUPERINTENDENT OF THE NORTH EASTERN DISTRICT, W Philip Agnew.  
 Retired Ministers: Peter C Mercer, Heather N Bell.
51. **Belfast East**, Brian B Anderson, Robin W D Waugh, Fiona R McCrea, Paul N W Maxwell, Alan Craig, Nigel Murphy \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Derek J Johnston has permission to serve with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust as a full time Chaplain.  
 Kenneth Connor has permission to serve with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.  
 John C Wonnacott has permission to serve with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust.  
 Retired Ministers: Paul Kingston B, G Harold Good, David J Kerr, Robert P Roddie, T David Cooper, W James Rea, Johnston McMaster, George G Campbell, G Leslie Spence, Edward I McDade, Gary J Mason, Ruth Craig, George Abbs.
52. **Belfast Finaghy and Seymour Hill**, Colin D Gracie.  
 Retired Minister: Robert W Wallace.
53. **Bangor and Holywood**, Philip Corrigan, Sharon Connor, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Retired Ministers: Arthur Parker, E Carson Nicholson, Edward Kirwan, Colin J Duncan.
54. **Donaghadee**, E Louise McKee. The Superintendent is Philip Corrigan.  
 Retired Ministers: A Robert Montgomery, Aian W Ferguson, Thomas R McKnight.
55. **Newtownards, Movilla Abbey and Comber**, Colin Milligan, Michael Spence, Alan Peek (Church of Ireland).  
 Retired Ministers: Duncan Alderdice, William T Buchanan, Alan Meara, Kenneth A Wilson, Robert Cooper, Daphne M Twinem, Mervyn G Ewing.
56. **Glastry and Portaferry**, Jordan Litchfield.  
 Retired Ministers: Heather Robb, Wesley Campbell.

57. **Lagan Valley and South Down Circuit**, David L Turtle, PRESIDENT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND, Thomas Clarke (NS), Ross J Harte (PT), Clare Kakuru (Church of Ireland), R E Richard Wright (NS), John McNair, Philip Patterson. Retired Ministers: Samuel Burch, J Winston Good, Edmund T I Mawhinney, S Kenneth Todd, James Williamson, Thomas R Deacon, William A Davison.

Cheryl A Patterson works under the direction of the District Superintendent.

Robert S Russell, Retired Minister, resides in England.

Donald P Ker, Retired Minister, resides in England.

Charles Harris, Retired Minister, resides in England.

Simon Oliver a minister of the Methodist Church in Britain resides on the Bangor and Holywood Circuit.

Richard C Johnston, a Retired Minister of the Uniting Church in Australia, resides in the Ballyclare Circuit.

Laurence H Churms, a Supernumerary Minister of the Methodist Church in Britain, resides in the Ballymena Circuit.

Richard Clarke, a Retired Minister of the United Church of Canada, resides in the Belfast South and Central Circuit.

Mervyn P Oliver, a Supernumerary Minister of the Methodist Church in Britain, resides in the Bangor and Holywood Circuit.

Stephen J Robinson, a Supernumerary Minister of the Methodist Church in Britain, resides in the Lagan Valley and South Down Circuit.

F Lawrence Wallace, a Supernumerary Minister of the Methodist Church in Britain, resides in the Newtownards, Movilla Abbey and Comber Circuit.

Seija M Wallace, a Supernumerary Minister of the Methodist Church in Britain, resides in the Newtownards, Movilla Abbey and Comber Circuit.

#### **Chaplains to H M Forces:**

Colin M Weir

John Mbayo

#### **Ministers with Partner Churches Overseas:**

1. Germany  
Barry J Sloan.

#### **2024-2025**

41. Newtownabbey Mission Circuit, Michael Spence.

# Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee

1. Conference receives the report

## **2. CANDIDATES FOR THE ORDAINED MINISTRY**

Regulations regarding Candidacy for the Ordained Ministry can be found on the 'Ministries Resources' section of the Methodist Church in Ireland website.

## **3. FORMATION, PROBATION AND ORDINATION**

Regulations regarding Formation, Probation and Ordination, can be found on the 'Ministries Resources' section of the Methodist Church in Ireland website.

## **4. PROBATIONERS' STUDIES**

The Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee shall set courses of studies for Probationers. Requests from Probationers to study courses other than those determined by the Committee must be made through the Director of the Ministries Team before 30<sup>th</sup> June.

## **5. ORDAINED MINISTRY FORMATION**

The Conference directs that Ordained Ministry Formation continue along the present lines with a university diploma in theology as the minimum academic standard.

## **6. PROBATIONERS AND THE LORD'S SUPPER**

The Conference directs that superintendents of circuits, who have probationers under their care, shall make arrangements for them to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at least quarterly.



# Retirement of Ministers

**George Abbs, BTh**, who has travelled twelve years. His career of over thirty years in the aerospace industry, included a significant involvement in trade union activity at local, national and international levels. Following his candidature, he served on two circuits in Northern Ireland where his quest for social justice has positively influenced his ministry. He was passionate in the challenge of wholeheartedly embracing the Gospel of Christ in all its facets. His collegueship has been valued by those within the Church.

**Harold M Agnew, BA**, who has travelled thirty-two years and has served on five circuits. His ministry has centred on seeking to make disciples of Jesus Christ and enabling them to grow and be missional in daily life. He has emphasised the importance of band fellowship as the context for spiritual growth. His pastoral care has been appreciated by the circuits on which he has served and in hospital and prison chaplaincy work. He has faithfully served the connexion in a variety of roles including as District Superintendent, member of the Governance Board and Secretary and Treasurer of the Ministers' Medical Fund.

**Gary J Mason, MBE, BA, DPhil, DD**, who has travelled for thirty-one years. In Springfield Road church he was responsible for setting up the Forthspring cross-community group on the peace line. As Superintendent of the East Belfast Mission, he developed Skainos as a new centre for the mission's work, including a new home for Hosford House, a hostel for people who are homeless. Receiving permission to serve without pastoral charge, he established a project, 'Rethinking Conflict' which focusses on conflict in Northern Ireland, racism in the USA, and Arab/Israeli relations. In addition, he has developed a training programme to equip young adults to lead in conflict resolution.

**T H Samuel McGuffin**, who has travelled forty years. He has served faithfully and effectively in both urban and rural settings throughout Ireland. His leadership and administrative skills have been recognised by his appointments to the roles of Stationer, District Superintendent and Editorial Secretary of the Conference. He was installed President of the Methodist Church in Ireland in 2019 and during his term he gave effective leadership at the start of the Covid Pandemic. None of these roles has taken anything from his primary calling to be a preacher and a pastor. His Biblical preaching and teaching has strengthened the faith of many and his compassionate and patient pastoral care has been deeply appreciated.

**Gary D Millar, MPhil, MTh**, who has travelled twenty-six years. He has served on five circuits on the North West, Down and North East Districts. His pastoral care found full expression in hospital and hospice chaplaincy, particularly in ecumenical settings, and he exercised his social gospel ministry through the Faith Workers' Branch of 'Unite', as well as sharing Christ through the Tribe of Judah Motorcycle Ministries. His love for the Lord has found expression in various aspects of ministry and has been greatly appreciated by those inside the church and also the wider community.

**Robert E Thomas, BTh\***, who has travelled for thirty-one years, twenty-eight years in Britain and three years in Ireland. Hearing God's call in his mid-teens, his call to ordained ministry was later recognised by the Methodist Church in Britain. Following his training in Lincoln Theological College, he served in a variety of rural and urban locations across England and Wales. In his attention to the text, preaching, and visiting whether in church or community settings, he has learned of God, earthed the Gospel and shared his faith. His congregations have appreciated his caring and sensitive leadership in times of celebration and challenge.

\*Robert E Thomas is a minister of the Methodist Church in Britain

Their colleagues and friends pray God's blessing on these ministers for their retirement.

## PASTORAL EFFICIENCY

1. The Conference directs:
  - (a) that the Pastoral Efficiency Session of 2024 be arranged by the Ministries Learning and Development Committee.
  - (b) that the theme and writer of the Pastoral Address be arranged by the Committee.
2. The Conference appoints the Convener of Pastoral Efficiency:  
Rev Dr Janet M Unsworth.

# MISCELLANEOUS RESOLUTIONS

## 1. THE BUREAU OF MEMBERSHIP

Annual Schedules of Receptions and Removals of members shall be sent to the Rev Denis M Maguire, who is re-appointed Secretary (see Manual of Laws, 2.17).

## 2. RETIREMENT TRIBUTES AND OBITUARIES

The following committee is appointed to revise obituaries of deceased ministers and entries in the Minutes concerning ministers who are retiring:

The President, the Secretary of the Conference and the Ex-President, Rev Maureen E Hassard, Rev TH Samuel McGuffin, Rev Dr Thomas R McKnight, Rev Dr Edmund T I Mawhinney, Rev Ruth E Patterson, Rev Robert P Roddie, Rev Alan G Wardlow, Ms Elaine Barnett, Rev Colin D Gracie (Convener).

Obituaries shall be sent by District Superintendents to Rev Colin Gracie before 1st March. Email: [colin.gracie@irishmethodist.org](mailto:colin.gracie@irishmethodist.org)

## 3. PERMISSION TO RETIRE

The Conference directs that ministers wishing to apply for permission to retire at the ensuing Conference shall submit an application in writing to the Superintendent of the District and to the Secretary of the Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund before 30th September.

## 4. THE PASTORAL CARE OF MINISTERS RESIDING OUTSIDE IRELAND

The Conference directs that:

As soon as possible, after deciding to reside outside Ireland, a minister shall inform the Secretary of the Conference, in writing, of the name and address of the person who will have pastoral care of her/him.

# The Representative Session

REV DAVID L TURTLE, BAgr, MDiv, President of the Conference  
and President of the Methodist Church in Ireland

MR THOMAS G WILSON, BA, Lay Leader of the Conference.

REV HEATHER M E MORRIS, BSc, BD, PhD, Secretary of the Conference

REV ALAN G WARDLOW, BA, Senior Assistant Secretary

MS ELAINE M BARNETT, Editorial Secretary

REV RUTH E PATTERSON, BTh, Journal Secretary

REV KENNETH CONNOR, FdA, BA, Letter Writer

## REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE BRITISH CONFERENCE

Rev Ruth Gee, Former President of the British Conference

Mr James Carver

Rev Mark Slaney

## OBSERVERS FROM THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

The Ven Dr Peter Thompson

Ms Lesley Bayley

## OBSERVERS FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

Very Rev Dr David Bruce

Mr Brian Magowan

## OBSERVER FROM THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Dr Joan Back

## OBSERVER FROM THE IRISH COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Mr James Nelson

# OFFICIAL APPOINTMENTS

1. Rev David L Turtle, BAgr, MDiv, is appointed President of the Conference and President of the Methodist Church in Ireland for the coming year.
2. Mr Thomas G Wilson, BA, is appointed Lay Leader of the Conference.
3. Rev Dr Heather M E Morris is appointed Secretary of the Conference and General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland for the coming year.
4. Rev Dr John D Alderdice is designated President of the Conference and of the Methodist Church in Ireland for the Connexional year 2024-2025.
5. Ms Elaine M Barnett is designated Lay Leader of the Conference for the Connexional years 2024-2026.
6. Rev Dr Heather M E Morris is designated Secretary of the Conference and General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland for the Connexional year 2024-2025.
7. Ms Elaine Barnett and Ms Pat Jamison are elected as Lay Representatives to the British Conference of 2024.
8. Ms Louise Wilson is elected Journal Secretary (Representative Session).

# Thanks to the President of the Conference

## Rev David Nixon

The Methodist Conference, on behalf of the people of the Methodist Church in Ireland, expresses its gratitude and appreciation to the Rev David Nixon for his dedicated and thoughtful leadership of the Church during the past year.

David came to the Presidency against the backdrop of the sad loss of his wife, Rhoda. His theme for the year, 'God's Lavish Love' and his exposition of the same on the night of his installation struck a deep chord with many. With deep and fresh insights of the story, he passionately sought to remind us of the heart of God and how the story of the Lost Son is our story – all of us.

Throughout the year, David's heart for the vulnerable and silenced has been laid bare through personal stories, sermons, and visits. His first-hand experience with the World Church and his involvement with vulnerable societies and peoples in the majority world has served him well in doing this.

David's desire for partnership and collaboration in mission was clearly demonstrated by his insistence on the President and Lay Leader working as closely together as possible. The Connexion has been very much blessed because of this collaboration during his Presidency. His qualities as a leader were brought to bear at meetings he chaired, and in the contributions he made. His humble, quiet, and unassuming personality were unmistakable. With maturity and wisdom, David has served the Connexion very well.

The Conference and the Methodist people throughout Ireland wish David God's richest blessing as he returns to circuit in Dun Laoghaire and the South East Leinster Circuit.

# Council on Social Responsibility

1. The Conference receives the report.
2. The following are the members of the Council for the ensuing year:  
The President, the Lay Leader, the General Secretary, the President Designate.  
**Southern Executive:**  
Chair: Rev Steven Foster, Mr Michael Briggs, Mr Geoffrey Corry, Rev Alison Gallagher, Rev Denis Maguire, Ms Sharon Morrow, Ms Isolda O'Connor, Ms Elizabeth Parkin, Rev Andrew Robinson, Mr Matty Tamen.  
**Northern Executive:**  
Chair: Rev Dr David Clements, Secretary: Ms Hazel Baird, Treasurer: Mr William Parkinson Rev Brian Anderson, Dr David Gallagher, Rev Daphne Hanna, Dr James Nelson, Rev Kenneth Robinson, Mr Alan Strong, Ms Jean Tubman.
3. The Conference appoints Ms Sara Stephens as Joint Secretary and as Secretary of the Southern Executive.
4. The Conference recommends that the following Sundays be observed in our churches:

Creation-tide	September/October
Social Responsibility Sunday	21st January 2024
Racial Justice Sunday	28th January 2024
5. Conference endorses the call to action 'Facing into Poverty' (Appendix 4A)
6. Conference receives the statement 'Racism and Homelessness' (Appendix 4B)
7. Previous Statements made by the Council on Social Responsibility can be found on the MCI website.

# The Governance Board

1. The Conference receives the Report.
2. The Conference re-appoints Mr Tony O'Connor as Chair of the Governance Board.
3. The Conference appoints the Governance Board as follows:

Chair: Mr Tony O'Connor

Convener: General Secretary, Rev Dr Heather Morris

President: Rev David L Turtle

Lay Leader: Mr Tom Wilson

Ex-President: Rev David Nixon

President-designate: Rev John D Alderdice

Chair of the Standing Committee of the Statutory Trustees: Mr Tom Millar

Elected by Conference: Rev Harold Agnew, Mr David Best, Mr John Clarke, Mr Paul Cummings, Ms Gillian Kingston, Rev Nigel G Mackey, Rev Richard Rowe and Ms Jackie Wright.

4. **Dates of Board meetings:**

2023: 14th September, 16th October, 23rd November, 14th December

2024: 18th January, 15th February, 14th March, 18th April, 23rd May

5. The Conference designates Rev Dr Heather ME Morris as Secretary of Conference for 2024/2025.
6. **Resolution on online meetings**  
The Conference permits online meetings at Society, Circuit, District and Conference levels, and directs that they be properly constituted as per the regulations for in-person meetings as set out in the Manual of Laws and be recognised as having equal status.
7. Conference notes that all MCI Policies can be accessed on Teams at MCI Resources/Policies and Procedures, or on request from the Secretary of Conference's Office.
8. **The Church Development Board**  
Consequent to changes in areas once covered by the Church Development Board and having received a Notice of Motion in 2023, the Conference amends the Manual of Laws as indicated in Appendix 5A.
9. Conference notes the Governance Board's intention to initiate a tender process for Connexional auditors for 2023.



## 10. **The President's Advisory Committee**

Conference approves the following changes to the Manual of Laws:

7.18 "The Conference shall appoint annually a President's Advisory Committee. It shall consist of the President and the Secretary of the Conference, together with two ministers and three lay persons, one of whom shall be the Lay Leader of the Conference, ~~the lay persons acting in cases other than those which only concern ministers.~~ It shall have power to direct the Superintendent of a District to make enquiry and report to it concerning any matter on her/his District which it deems advisable.

The Committee shall inform the Governance Board, as to any matters which pertain to the governance of the Church.

## 11. **Statutory Trustees**

Conference notes the changes to Appendix 4 of the Manual of Laws (Appendix 5B)

## 12. **Methodist Historic Records**

The Governance Board:

- noted with appreciation the work of the Methodist Historical Society and recommends that every Society contribute to the funds of the Methodist Historical Society of Ireland.
- encourages Methodist to join the Society.
- directed that all documents no longer in current use, including printouts from electronic records, be lodged with a competent authority for safekeeping and future reference. For this purpose, it recommends the archives of the Methodist Historical Society.

## 13. **Safeguarding**

Conference directs that every volunteer, office holder or paid employee in the Methodist Church in Ireland who works with children, young people or vulnerable adults:

- must undergo the relevant, appropriate police vetting procedures. These checks are provided by AccessNI in Northern Ireland and the National Vetting Bureau in the Republic of Ireland and are facilitated by the Methodist Church in Ireland. Those working in both jurisdictions will be subject to checks by both authorities
- must be re-vetted at least every three years by the Methodist Church in Ireland, and
- must attend Safeguarding Training provided by the Methodist Church in Ireland once every three years.

14. Conference directs that all circuits/churches consult with IMYC and MCI Human Resources when considering employing a youth worker, children's worker or family worker.

## 15. **Ministries Team**

Conference directs that the Policies relating to the exercise of the Office of ordained ministry be included as Appendices to the Manual of Laws.

## 16. Conference adds the following paragraphs to the Manual of Laws: 9.18

### General Statement on Use of the Church's Income and Property

The income and property of the Methodist Church in Ireland (the "Church") shall be applied solely towards the promotion of main object(s) of the Church as set forth in the Constitution and Manual of Laws. No portion of the Church's income and property shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit to members of the Church . No charity trustee shall be appointed to any office of the Church paid by salary or fees or receive any remuneration or other benefit in money or money's worth from the Church. However, nothing shall prevent any payment in good faith by the Church of:

1. reasonable and proper remuneration to any member or servant of the Church (not being a charity trustee) for any services rendered to the Church;
2. interest at a rate not exceeding 1% above the Bank of England interest rate (NI) or Euro Interbank Offered Rate (Euribor) (RoI) per annum on money lent by charity trustees or other members of the trust/body to the Church;
3. reasonable and proper rent for premises demised and let by any member of the Church (including any charity trustee) to the Church;
4. reasonable and proper out-of-pocket expenses incurred by any charity trustee in connection with their attendance to any matter affecting the Church
5. fees, remuneration or other benefit in money or money's worth to any Company of which a charity trustee may be a member holding not more than one hundredth part of the issued capital of such Company;
6. the provision of accommodation and care for any charity trustee who is a Minister, provided that same is not made as a result of or in connection to their position as trustee;
7. reasonable remuneration to any charity trustee who is a Minister, provided that same is not made as a result of or in connection to their position as trustee;
8. Nothing shall prevent any payment by the Church to a person pursuant to an agreement entered into in compliance with the Charities Act (NI) or section 89 of the Charities Act, 2009 (as for the time being amended, extended or replaced).

## 9.19 Dissolution

If upon the winding up or dissolution of the Church there remains, after satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever, it shall not be paid to or distributed among the members of the Church. Instead, such property shall be given or transferred to some other charitable institution or institutions having main objects similar to the main objects of the Church. The institution or institutions to which the property is to be given or transferred shall prohibit the distribution of their income and property among their members to an extent at least as great as is imposed on

the Church under or by virtue of the Income and Property clause hereof. The Church through its Governance Board shall select the relevant institution or institutions at or before the time of dissolution, and if and so far as effect cannot be given to such provisions, then the property shall be given or transferred to some charitable object with the agreement of the Charities Regulator. Final accounts will be prepared and submitted that will include a section that identifies and values any assets transferred along with the details of the recipients and the terms of the transfer.

#### 9.20 Powers of the Church

The Church shall have the following powers:

1. To grant pensions, gratuities, allowances or charitable aid to any person who may have served the Church as an employee, or to the wives, husbands, children or other dependents of such person provided that such pensions, gratuities, allowances or charitable aid shall be no more than that provided by a pension scheme covered by the legislation relevant to the jurisdiction and provided that such pension scheme has been operated by the Church and the beneficiary of the pensions, gratuities, allowances or charitable aid, or their spouse or parent, has been a member of the pension scheme while employed by the Church; and to make payments towards insurance and to form and contribute to provident and benefit funds for the benefit of any persons employed by the Church and to subscribe or guarantee money for charitable objects.
2. To invest in such ways as shall seem desirable to the Governance Board any moneys of the Church not immediately required for the use in connection with its Main Object and to place any such moneys on deposit with bankers and others; subject nevertheless as regards the making of investments to such conditions (if any) and such consents (if any) as may for the time being be imposed or required by law and subject also as hereinafter provided; prior permission to be obtained from the Revenue Commissioners where the Church intends to accumulate funds over a period in excess of two years for any purpose.

#### 9.21

No amendment may be made by the Conference to the Church's charitable purposes that would cause the Methodist Church in Ireland to cease to be a charity at law.

#### 17. **The Working Party on the role of the President and Lay Leader**

The Conference asks the Working Party to

- a) Refine and develop its proposals in light of the Conference discussion
- b) To bring a revised Report, along with draft consequential changes to the Manual of Laws, to Conference in 2024.

The Conference gives authority to the Governance Board to co-opt new members onto the Working Party if deemed necessary.

## **18. Thanks**

The Conference records its heartfelt thanks to all who have stepped aside from Connexional roles or employment with the Methodist Church in Ireland.

### **Thanks to the Editorial Secretary of the Conference, Elaine Barnett**

The Conference expresses its heartfelt thanks to Elaine for her service to the Conference as an Assistant Secretary. Elaine was elected in 2000, the first lay person to be voted to serve as part of the Conference Secretariat. She was Journal Secretary from 2000-2016, becoming Editorial Secretary at the Conference of 2017.

Elaine has brought love for this part of God's Church, wisdom, that rare combination of an eye for detail combined with an ability to see the big picture and kind good humour to the role. The Conference owes her a debt of gratitude.

### **Thanks to the Press Officer, Rev Roy Cooper**

Rev Roy Cooper has served the Connexion as Press Officer since 1996. Over those 27 years he has wisely guided the Church as we have sought to engage 'in the public square'. Roy wisely discerned when the church should speak, in particular when we should take an initiative. He brought his significant gifts in relationship building to the role and built helpful relationships with many in the media.

Over many years Presidents and Lay Leaders have appreciated Roy's support and encouragement. We are grateful to God and to him that Roy will continue to use those gifts in his new role as Personal Assistant to the President.

# The Governance Board

## REPORT FROM THE WORKING PARTY ON CONFERENCE

1. The Conference receives the report.
2. The Conference recommends that necessary Conference costs be regarded as a Connexional expense and should be met in accordance with the Connexional Expenses and Allowances Policy.
3. The Conference receives as a Notice of Motion to the Conference of 2024 the following changes to the Manual of Laws:

### The Ministerial Session

7.03 The Conference in its Ministerial Session shall consist of:

- (a) The President and the ministers appointed by the British Conference to accompany her/him.
- (b) ~~All the elected and ex-officio ministerial members of the Representative Session.~~
- ~~(c) Such other ministers in full connexion as shall have permission from their respective District Ministerial Synods to attend.~~
- (b) All ministers in Full Connexion with the Methodist Church in Ireland.

### The Representative Session

7.04 As provided in the Constitution VI. (2) (b), "The Conference in its Representative Session consists of the President of the British Conference and the representatives appointed by that Conference, together with not less than 100, nor more than 150 ministers, and an equal number of lay members, elected or appointed in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Conference."

7.05 The ministers shall consist of:

- (a) The President of the Methodist Church in Ireland,
  - (b) The General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland,
  - (c) The Ex-President of the Methodist Church in Ireland,
  - (d) The Assistant Secretaries ~~of the preceding Irish Conference,~~
  - ~~(e) The Representatives to the preceding British Conference, and to the ensuing British Conference,~~
  - ~~(f) (e)The District Superintendents and the Secretaries of Districts,~~
- Along with
- (f) All stationed ministers in Full Connexion with the Methodist Church in Ireland
  - (g) All ministers who are in Full Connexion, and who have permission to be without a stationed appointment or to serve with other bodies and who are not retired.

(h) Covenant partnership ministers who are stationed in Covenant Partnership Churches

(g) ~~The Ministerial Treasurers and Secretaries of the following Connexional Funds, where appointed:~~

- Home Mission Fund
- Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund
- Children's Fund
- Chapel Fund and Property Board Development Account
- General Education Fund
- World Mission Partnership
- Child Care Society
- Methodist Youth and Children's Team
- Methodist Ministers' Medical Fund
- Statutory Trustees

~~(h) The Registrar of Deeds and Documents (if an ordained minister),~~

~~(i) The Committee Membership Secretary,~~

~~(j) (i) Ministers who have filled the office of President of the Church prior to 1995; after 1995 ministers who have filled the office of President of the Church following the completion of their Presidential year for a period of four years,~~

~~(k) The Principal of Edgehill Theological College,~~

~~(l) The Principal of Wesley College, Dublin (if an ordained minister),~~

~~(m) The Principal of Gurteen College (if an ordained minister),~~

~~(n) The Chair of the Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee,~~

~~(o) Any minister of the Irish Conference serving as an officer of World Mission Partnership,~~

~~(p) The Ministerial Connexional Secretary for Local Preachers,~~

~~(q) The Conference Director of Music,~~

~~(r) The Convenor of the Faith and Order Committee (if a minister),~~

~~(s) All Superintendents of Circuits,~~

~~(t) (j) Additional members in Full Connexion, elected by all ministers in Full Connexion according to the allocation printed in the Minutes of Conference.~~

7.06 The lay members shall consist of:

(a) The Lay Leader of the Conference.

(b) A Any lay Assistant Secretary(s) of the preceeding Conference

~~(b) The two Irish Lay Representatives to the preceding British Conference,  
The two Irish Lay Representatives to the ensuing British Conference,~~

(c) The Lay Treasurers of the following, where appointed:

- Home Mission Fund
- Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund
- Ministers' Children's Fund
- Chapel Fund and Property Board Development Account
- General Education Fund
- World Mission Partnership
- Methodist Women in Ireland
- Child Care Society
- Ministerial Training Fund

- ~~Statutory Trustees (2)~~
- ~~Methodist Youth and Children's Team~~
- ~~Council on Social Responsibility (2)~~
- ~~General Purposes Fund~~
- ~~World Development and Relief Fund~~

(c) The District Lay Leaders

(d) Lay Representatives nominated by Circuit Executives, as provided for in paragraph 7.08.

(f) (e) Lay Representatives to be elected by the Committees of the following Funds and Institutions from among their own members ~~one each by-~~

- World Mission Partnership
- Methodist Youth and Children's Team
- World Development and Relief
- Council on Social Responsibility (2)
- The Faith and Order Committee (2)
- Statutory Trustees
- Local Preachers' ~~Committee~~
- ~~Wesley College, Dublin~~
- ~~Methodist College, Belfast~~
- The Ministries Team
- ~~Gurteen College~~
- Methodist Women in Ireland (2)
- Audit, Risk and Budget Committee of the Governance Board
- Prison and Healthcare Chaplaincy
- Inter Church Relations
- Home Mission Team
- Property Board
- Board of Education
- Irish Methodist Ministers Retirement Fund
- Ministers Childrens Fund
- Childcare Society

(e) (f) Three Youth Representatives, who shall not exceed twenty-eight years of age at the time of her/his selection, from each District, selected by the District Superintendent in consultation with the Irish Methodist Youth and Children's Team.

(g) The Lay members of the Governance Board

~~(g) The Convenor of the Faith and Order Committee (if a layperson)~~

~~The Chairperson of the Governance Board~~

~~The Chairperson of the Church Development Board~~

~~The Chairperson of the Property Board~~

~~The General Secretary of the Irish Methodist Youth and Children's Team (if a layperson).~~

(h) Three representatives nominated by the Pioneer Mission Team.

(i) Lay Representatives elected by the Governance Board in such numbers, with the foregoing, to complete the number required.

Appointments to Conference:

7.07 Lay representatives to Conference shall be those persons nominated by the Circuit Executives. Those eligible must be at least eighteen years of age and members of the Methodist Church for at least two consecutive years immediately preceding nomination. Circuit Executives shall also nominate persons as substitutes in case the first nominee is unable to attend. Superintendents of Circuits are required to inform the Secretary of the Conference of the names of the persons nominated and that such persons are prepared to attend.

~~7.08 Each Circuit with less than 500 members shall have one representative, and each Circuit with 500 or more shall have two representatives annually. The numbers of members for this purpose shall be those printed in the Minutes of the previous Conference and shall not include junior members.~~

Each Circuit with less than 300 members shall have one representative, each Circuit with 300-600 members shall have two representatives and Circuits with more than 600 members shall have three representatives annually. The numbers of members for this purpose shall be those printed in the Minutes of the previous Conference and shall not include junior members.

#### Supplemental Lists

~~7.09 The names of the four ministerial members who shall be next in order of voting to those elected by the District Ministerial Synod shall be forwarded from each District as a Supplemental List.~~

~~7.10~~ 7.09 The Lay Supplemental List shall consist of those nominated as substitutes by the Circuit Executives.

~~7.11~~ 7.10 The full Supplemental List of each District shall be sent to the Secretary of the Conference who shall summon representatives therefrom as vacancies occur.

~~7.20 One~~ Two of the Assistant Secretaries, and one of the Letter Writers, may be a lay ~~person~~ people....



# Faith and Order Committee

1. The Conference receives the report.
2. The Conference appoints the Committee:  
The President, the Lay Leader, the General Secretary (Secretary of Conference) the Ex-President, the President Designate, the Lay Leader Designate, ,  
Mr Michael Briggs, Rev Philip Gallagher, Ms Gillian Kingston, Ms Hazel Loney, Mr Andrew Mullen, Rev Ruth E Patterson, Rev Dr Stephen F Skuce, Rev Michael Spence, Rev Dr Andrew Stobart, Rev Dr Janet Unsworth, \_\_\_\_\_.  
Church of Ireland Observer: Rev Dr Stanley Gamble.
3. The Conference re-appoints Ms Gillian Kingston as Convener.
4. Dates of Meetings: to be arranged as needed.

## Past Cases Review

1. The Conference receives the Past Cases Review Report (Appendix 6) and notes in particular the Church's apology to all who have been victims of abuse in the life of our Church and to wider society, and our wholehearted commitment to address all of the areas highlighted, so that the Methodist Church in Ireland is a safe space for all.

# Connexional Team

1. The Governance Board received the report.
2. The Governance Board re-appointed Rev Dr John Alderdice as Convenor of the Connexional Team.

3. The membership of the Connexional Team is as follows:

Convenor: Rev Dr John Alderdice

President: Rev David Turtle

Lay Leader: Mr Tom Wilson

General Secretary, Rev Dr Heather Morris

Ex-President: Rev David Nixon

Lay Leader Designate: Ms Elaine Barnett

District Superintendents:

Rev Andrew Dougherty, Rev Dr Stephen Skuce, Rev Philip Agnew

Property Board: Rev Thomas Clarke

Ministries Team: Rev Dr Janet Unsworth

Head of Finance: Ms Nicola Robinson

IMYC: Ms Gillian Gilmore

Home Mission Team: Ms Kathryn Harte

WDR/WMP: Mr Tim Dunwoody

In attendance:

Ms Gillian Skillen (Operations Manager); Ms Cliodhna Smyth (Executive Assistant)

4. Connexional Team, Stationing Sub-Group:

President: Rev David Turtle

Lay Leader: Mr Tom Wilson

General Secretary: Rev Dr Heather Morris

President-Designate: Rev Dr John Alderdice

District Superintendents:

Rev Andrew Dougherty, Rev Dr Stephen Skuce, Rev Philip Agnew

Ministries Team: Rev Dr Janet Unsworth

5. The Governance Board appointed the Officers, Boards, Committees and Teams as detailed in the resolutions from IMYC, Home Mission, MWI, WDR, WMP and the Ministries Team
6. The Conference grants authorisation to the following Local Preachers to preside at the Lord's Supper for the 2023-2024 Connexional year:
  - Mr Simon Kilpatrick in Urban Junction
  - Mr Norman Henry on the Castlederg Circuit
  - Mr John McConnell on the Lisbellaw, Tempo and Maguiresbridge Circuit.

7. The Conference, on the recommendation of the Stationing Sub-Group of the Connexional Team, grants dispensation to the following probationers to preside at the Lord's Supper:
  - John McNair
  - Andrew Topley
  - R E Richard Wright
  
8. **Circuit Changes**

The Conference notes the following changes:

  - a. That from 1st July 2023 the Bangor and Holywood Circuit will comprise the Carnalea, Primacy and Holywood societies, with the closure of the Ballyholme, Hamilton Road and Queen's Parade societies.
  - b. that the Society at Sandy Row be closed.
  - c. that the Church on the Hill (Maghaberry) Society become part of the Lagan Valley Circuit.
  - d. that the Tullyroan and Cranagill Societies become part of the Portadown Circuit.
  - e. That a new Circuit called 'The Cavan Town Circuit' be created.
  - f. that the Society which meets at Skerries should close from 1st July 2023.
  
9. The Conference approves the changes to the Manual of Laws, as outlined in Appendix 7A: THE HOME MISSION TEAM  
Appendix 7B: LOCAL PREACHERS
  
10. The Conference adopts the 'Methodist Church in Ireland Youth and Children's Strategy', below, and commits itself to its implementation.

### **The Methodist Church in Ireland's Youth and Children's Strategy 2023-2028**

The Methodist Church in Ireland, through its youth and children's team has been carrying out an 'Exploring the land' exercise in 2021/2022. As we emerged from the Pandemic, we recognised that it was a key time for us as a church to consider how and what we would do to continue to develop our work with the next generation. We asked questions like; What is God asking of us? What are the opportunities? The challenges? Why do we want children and young people to be part of our church communities?

It was a time of 'taking stock' and 'exploring the land,' that involved surveys and focus groups both North and South. We were encouraged by the response to surveys and involvement in specific focus groups for parents, leaders/clergy, and young people, alongside group and individual conversations with clergy. Two reports were written to capture the findings that informed a strategic planning process. The process involved the Connexional Team, Connexional Youth and Children's advisory group and some key practitioners, including IMYC staff. The hope is that what we have observed and heard will inform and shape the churches work with and for young people and children over the next decade.

The task of reaching and walking with the 'next' generation is a whole church mission and task and so the below vision and strategic priorities are not solely the job of those who we consider experts with young people and children, but for the Methodist Church as a family young and not so young, across this Island.

## **Vision**

We were grateful to Dr Helen Warnock for her leadership through the strategic planning process. The paragraphs below are the vision she heard articulated in the room on our strategic planning day, as we all reflected and responded to the 'Exploring the land' reports from the North and South of Ireland.

**Children and young people matter. We love them, we have a heart for them, and we carry a mission imperative to engage them.**

We carry a vision for a generation who will shine.

- Their passion for Jesus shines and is obvious to all around them and draws others to them and God.
- They will recognise that at times they need to be counter cultural.
- They will know their place in the intergenerational community of wholehearted followers of Jesus that is Methodism.

So, we stand before God and acknowledge we need His help. We acknowledge we carry some sense of lament as to our current state, the state of the church and the home or lack of home that we are for children and young people.

We are open to new ways, as we seek to value relationship-building, provide places of safety and participation, as we engage with the tough aspects of life, and encourage discipleship. We want to pray with young people and link well with their families as we work intergenerationally.

We will seek to do this through a youth and children's strategy and engagement that is owned and prioritised by the whole church.

- Where children and young people are heard and valued.
- And money and resources are released locally and nationally.

## **Strategic priorities 2023 - 2028**

Where young people are mentioned, the age range we are focused on is 25 years of age and under.

**By 2028 there will be a substantial increase in the numbers of young people who are wholehearted followers of Jesus for the transformation of the world.**

What do we mean by 'substantial'?

A substantial increase will mean the Methodist church in Ireland will look different due to the life and vitality young people and children bring as they live as disciples of Jesus, sharing their faith and heart.

### Four key strategic priorities:

1. **Every Circuit strategy** – Accompanying every circuit as they develop a strategy to enable them to be intentionally discipling and actively reaching young people and their families.
2. **New Faith communities** – Pioneering new faith communities, whose primary goal it is to reach young people and their families.
3. **Leaders who are young** – Intentional passing on of leadership, engaging and releasing the under 25s into leadership that shapes the Methodist Church in Ireland.
4. **Theological resourcing** – We will be a church that is engaging and informing on cultural issues so that young people have safe spaces to process the issues and questions relevant to their world and stage of development.

### Considering the 'how?'

#### **Every Circuit strategy**

To develop a circuit strategy that focuses on intentionally discipling and is actively reaching young people, which has the aims of

- developing an understanding that discipling of young people is a crucial part of the mission of the whole Church
- building communities of transformation in which young people become wholehearted followers of Jesus and take their place in God's mission.
- recruitment, training and ongoing support of volunteers

This will be achieved through:

- (i) Focusing in: Working with the DSs, through prayer and discernment, IMYC will identify a number of circuits which IMYC staff members will then accompany as they develop a circuit strategy.
- (ii) Placing of youth workers, supported by Connexional funding as necessary. It is proposed that this is a key strand in Connexional mission strategy as resources are released.
- (iii) Multiplication: by telling the stories of the difference made and training for ministers and key lay people by IMYC, circuits will develop and implement a strategy.
- (iv) Connexional events: These have proven to be significant in young people coming to faith in Jesus and growing in that faith, they complement and provide resource for the work locally by their ability to catalyse and accelerate what God is up to, as they build community and provide opportunities to serve and encounter God.

Some things to note:

- Accompaniment – IMYC members of staff will listen, ask, probe, challenge, inspire, identify, call out and resource as they accompany a circuit.
- Identifying the who, where and where not in the context, will involve sacrificial decision making, and enable the work to be contextually relevant.

- It will be necessary to identify clergy and other leaders who have heart and vision for this work. Leadership matters. Capacity will need to be created by releasing them from other responsibilities to focus on this and invest heavily with time and relationships.
- Training, support, accompanying and resourcing will have the aim of giving confidence to the local context to grow existing work or start something new, enable them to place it at the top of the agenda and create an action plan.
- Youth workers employed will focus on enabling others/building volunteer capacity in the local context.
- Sundays matter: A recognition that the Sunday gathering matters and needs to say to young people you belong, they need to be accessible.

### **New Faith communities**

Pioneering new faith communities, whose primary goal it is to reach children, young people and their families will be achieved through:

- (i) In year 0-2 - intentionally planting/resourcing two/three new faith communities. This will require prayer, discernment, identifying leaders and contexts, a release of people, resource and space.
- (ii) In year 2-5 – Telling the stories and gathering the learning as these communities grow and develop.
- (iii) In year 5-10 - multiply!!!!
- (iv) Drawing on the experience within Methodism and the experiences of other churches, in partnership with Home Missions.

### **Leaders who are young**

Intentional passing on of leadership, engaging and releasing the under 25s into leadership that shapes the Methodist Church in Ireland. This will be achieved through:

- (i) Training in mentoring and coaching skills for those who walk with young people.
- (ii) Identifying and giving opportunities for young people to use their gifts and skills both locally, nationally, and globally to develop them as spiritual leaders.
- (iii) Giving opportunities and spaces to explore vocation and calling, as already happens at Autumn Soul and Soul Mates.
- (iv) Allowing young people to shape worship for their generation and the next both locally and nationally.
- (v) Creating opportunities for children and young people to truly participate in the life of the local, connexional and world church by training volunteer leaders/workers and clergy in participation and hearing the voice of young people and children.
- (vi) Developing and investing resource in Internship opportunities– pioneer and youth and children’s work.
- (vii) Developing and investing resource in service/mission opportunities in Ireland and beyond.
- (viii) Overflow type events developed to train young leaders across the whole island.

- (ix) Safe space leadership opportunities at MCI events – where it's ok to fail, apprenticeships alongside older leaders.

### **Theological resourcing**

We will be a church that is engaging and informing on cultural issues so that young people have safe spaces to process the issues and questions relevant to their world and stage of development.

- (i) This will involve producing and sourcing resources and thinking/thinkers that/who can engage young people theologically and in a Methodist way. This may involve investing in theological training for existing/new staff.
- (ii) Safe spaces – through events regionally and nationally we will model creating safe spaces that allow young people to process issues and questions that matter to them, with significant adults.
- (iii) An intentional shift from transactional programmes to building communities in which transformation happens. Resources and training to enable local churches to create these communities.

# **RESOLUTIONS from the BOOK OF REPORTS**

The Resolutions which follow were received by  
the Governance Board or Connexional Team (as appropriate)  
at their meetings January – April 2023,  
and reported to the Conference.



## CONNEXIONAL SAFEGUARDING BOARD

1. The Governance Board received the report.
2. The Governance Board re-appointed Mr Lindsay Conway as Chair of the Connexional Safeguarding Board.
3. The Governance Board re-appointed Mr Nicholas A Blair as Connexional Safeguarding Officer.
4. The Governance Board appointed the Connexional Safeguarding Board as follows:  
Mr Lindsay Conway (Convenor & Chair), Ms Cathy Bell, Mr Nicholas Blair, Mr Chris Boucher, Ms Laura Ewing, Ms Gillian Gilmore, Mr Stephen Gray, Ms Corinne Kingston, Rev Paul Maxwell, Ms Grace McGurk, Ms Gail Mercer, Ms Kathryn Montgomery, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.  
Ex Officio Members: Rev Philip Agnew; Rev Andrew Dougherty; Rev Dr Stephen Skuce.
5. The Governance Board directed that everyone who works with children, young people or vulnerable adults under the auspices of MCI, must attend training provided by MCI, at least once every three years.
6. Conference directs that every volunteer, office holder or paid employee in the Methodist Church in Ireland who works with children, young people or vulnerable adults -
  - must undergo the relevant, appropriate police vetting procedures. These checks are provided by AccessNI in Northern Ireland and the National Vetting Bureau in the Republic of Ireland and are facilitated by the Methodist Church in Ireland. Those working in both jurisdictions will be subject to checks by both authorities
  - must be re-vetted at least every three years by the Methodist Church in Ireland, and
  - must attend Safeguarding Training provided by the Methodist Church in Ireland once every three years.
7. The Governance Board on behalf of the Conference acknowledges, with thanks, the contribution to Safeguarding that IMYC provides in lieu of administrative support.
8. The Governance Board encourages every Methodist Society to register as a 'Safe Place' for those experiencing domestic abuse.

# PROPERTY BOARD

1. The Governance Board received the report from the Property Board.
2. The Governance Board directed that Societies provide requested returns within the specified timeframes to ensure accuracy of information.
3. The Governance Board re-appointed the General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland as the holder of the Register of Deeds and Documents.
4. The Governance Board expressed its thanks to the Trustees of the Joseph Rank Trust, the Benefact Trust and all Trusts and Groups who have supported the work of the Church for their ongoing generous financial support for the work of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
5. The Governance Board appointed the Board as follows:

**Board Membership 2023–2024:**

The President, the Lay Leader, the General Secretary

**Officers of The Property Board:**

Rev Thomas Clarke, Chair\*  
Rev Kenneth Connor, Secretary\*  
Rev Mark Forsyth, Treasurer\*

**District Representatives:**

Southern: Rev Andrew Kingston, Mr Ross Hinds  
North Western: Rev John Beacom, Mr Tony Foster  
North Eastern: Rev Sam Campbell, Mr Clem McKee\*

**Property Board Plans Committee:**

Mr Clem McKee, Convener\*; Rev Kenneth Connor, Secretary;  
Mr John Hutchinson, Rev Thomas Clarke and Mr Simon Kinghan

\*Denotes membership of the Property Board Executive Committee

6. **Dates of Board Meetings:**  
21st September 2023  
21st March 2024
8. **Summary of Property Returns**  
The low level of returns in recent years meant it was not possible to give a true picture of MCI property matters. A new digital *Society Annual Audit Form* has been circulated to all Circuits, and it is hoped that this will result in a higher response rate, and therefore a more accurate picture of Methodist property in future years.
9. **Property Sales:**  

Dublin North (Dwelling: 32 Ashcroft, Raheny, Dublin)	€452,000
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## 10. Property Purchases:

Ballinamallard & Trillick Circuit (47 Main St. Ballinamallard)	£175,000
Ballinamallard & Trillick Circuit (45 Main St. Ballinamallard)	£ 45,000

## 11. Procedures

- Circuits are reminded that all applications relating to the purchase, sale or renovation of manses are to be processed through the Property Board following consultation and sign off by the District Superintendent.
- Meeting dates for the Property Board and the Property Board Executive will be circulated to all Superintendent ministers during the month of July and the Board asks for completed application forms to be with the Secretary of the Property Board one week before the meeting.  
Application for Property Board forms and the submission of Property Board forms are from/to [propertyboard@irishmethodist.org](mailto:propertyboard@irishmethodist.org)
- Consultation with the MCI Estates Manager should take place as early as possible to ensure all Statutory approvals are in place
- Circuits are reminded that before Final Permission to proceed with a scheme is given that the Board needs to be satisfied that two-thirds of the finance is in place and the Circuit has the facilities to cash-flow the project.
- Circuits are asked to ensure that the Superintendent and Property Stewards attend the training on Property Board processes.
- Circuits are reminded that responsibility for the processing of applications relating to the purchase, sale or repair of manse has now moved to the Property Board. All such applications must first be agreed by the District Superintendent.
- Circuits are reminded of the Governance Board direction that the Property Board may only in exceptional circumstances consider provision of 'open-ended' bridging facilities to Societies due to the high risk associated with these arrangements.
- Circuits are reminded of the Governance Board direction that the Property Board may extend the loan term available from 5 years to 7 years and in exceptional circumstances for an amount in excess of £100k to 10 years subject to repayment capacity being demonstrated.
- Circuits are reminded of the direction that in all cases where major repairs and/or improvements are contemplated in respect of Trust property, application be made for such grants as may be available from the Local Authority.

# STATUTORY TRUSTEES

1. The Governance Board adopted the report.
2. The Governance Board re-appointed Rev Dr Heather M E Morris as the Secretary of the Trustees and Registrar of Deeds and Documents.
3. The Governance Board re-appointed Mr Thomas H Millar as Chair of the Statutory Trustees.
4. The Governance Board designates Mr John Clarke as Chair of the Statutory Trustees from Conference 2024.
5. The following are the Trustees:  
Rev John D Alderdice, Rev Brian B Anderson, Rev Ruth Craig, Rev Mark S Forsyth, Rev Dr Laurence A M Graham, Rev T H Samuel McGuffin, Rev Dr Thomas R McKnight, Rev Dr Heather M E Morris, Rev Jeremy Nicoll, Rev Dr Stephen F Skuce, Rev David L Turtle, Rev Robin W D Waugh, Rev Dr Sahr J Yambasu, Ms Hazel Baird, Mr John G Clarke, Ms Joan Doherty, Ms Eileen French, Ms Gillian Gilmore, Mr David J Hopley, Mr Hal I Hosford, Ms Catherine McIlroy, Mr Thomas H Millar, Mr Ivor Moffitt, Mr Rory O'Ferrall, Mr Charles Payne, and Mr Steve Taylor.
6. The following are the members of the Standing Committee for the year 2023-2024:  
Rev John D Alderdice, Rev T H Samuel McGuffin, Rev Dr Thomas R McKnight, Rev Dr Heather M E Morris, Rev Jeremy Nicoll, Rev Dr Stephen F Skuce, Ms Hazel Baird, Mr John Clarke, Mr Hal Hosford, Mr David Hopley, Mr Ivor Moffitt, Mr Thomas H Millar and Mr Rory O'Ferrall.  
(The Secretary of the Trustees is ex-officio Secretary of any committee)
7. The Governance Board directed that the income from the Foundation of the Ministers' Sons' Fund for the coming year be paid to the Ministers' Children's Fund, designated for payment to Wesley College Dublin for Boarder Foundationers.
8. The Governance Board commends the scheme for Gift Aid donations in Northern Ireland and the Scheme for Tax Relief for donations to eligible charities in the Republic of Ireland to those of our people who are in a position to make such donations.
9. The Governance Board adopted the following additions and amendments to Appendix 4 of the Manual of Laws:

## 4. Trustee's Length of Service

At each Annual General Meeting, the ~~Administration Committee~~ **Governance Committee** shall submit the names of those Trustees who will have completed ten years of service by the ensuing Conference. These names will then be submitted to Conference for removal by reason of retirement. When a Trustee so scheduled for retirement is involved in ongoing work, the Governance Committee may

recommend that the Trustee's retirement be delayed for up to three years provided that during the twelve months previous to the date of her/his retirement he/she shall have attended at least one meeting of the Trustees.

~~Administration Committee~~ ~~Governance Committee~~

15. The ~~Administration Committee~~ ~~Governance Committee~~ shall be appointed by the Annual General Meeting. It shall meet at least once a year and report to the Annual General Meeting.

Its responsibilities are

- a) The nomination of new Trustees, professional advisors, auditors, investment managers, legal advisors and bankers
- b) The nomination of Trustees to outside bodies as needed
- c) The monitoring of the current governance structures for the Trustees
- d) The training for Trustees.

# COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

1. The following amounts shall be contributed by the Circuits in the year 2024.

<b>Circuit</b>	<b>2024 Euro</b>	<b>2024 Stg</b>
Dublin South City	25,899	
Dublin Central Mission	19,165	
Dublin North	10,544	
Dublin South	25,057	
Dublin Sandymount Christ Church	8,096	
South East Leinster	42,321	
Kilkenny & Carlow	10,871	
Waterford	8,514	
Portlaoise	10,710	
North Tipperary	10,732	
Birr, Athlone & Tullamore	4,492	
Cork South & Kerry	33,934	
West Cork	28,160	
Limerick	3,541	
Adare & Ballingrane	9,545	
Enniskillen		28,271
Springfield & Church Hill		10,009
Lisbellaw, Maguiresbridge & Tempo		11,056
Upper Erne		17,520
Fivemiletown		13,075
Pettigo & Irvinestown		11,718
Ballinamallard & Trillick		21,916
North Connacht & Longford	24,343	
Londonderry, Inishowen, Limavady & Strabane Mission		29,525
Castlederg		8,551
Omagh & Fintona		31,259
Donegal, Ballintra & Inver	12,796	
Dunkineely & Ardara	9,352	
Portadown		57,677
Newry		12,636
Charlemont & Cranagill		8,488

Dungannon	20,735
Cookstown & South Derry	12,845
Armagh	12,008
Aughnacloy & Monaghan	9,532
Lurgan	41,569
Glenavy & Moira	18,482
Maghaberry	3,854
Tandragee & Richhill	30,708
Banbridge & Donaghcloney	16,144
Coleraine, Portrush, Portstewart & Ballymoney	25,096
Newtownabbey Mission	58,697
Ballyclare	21,419
Carrickfergus	46,734
Larne	22,754
Antrim	12,862
Ballymena	14,661
Cullybackey	21,019
Belfast North	43,169
Belfast South & Central	22,083
Belfast (Ballynafeigh, Knockbreda, Belvoir & Cairnshill)	36,008
Belfast East	126,045
Belfast (Finaghy & Seymour Hill)	24,839
Bangor & Holywood	38,097
Donaghadee	13,648
Newtownards, Movilla Abbey & Comber	41,200
Glastry & Portaferry	13,691
Lagan Valley & South Down	93,815

The Assessment for Methodist College, Belfast, the Queen's University Chaplaincy, Belfast, Wesley College, Dublin and the Dublin Student Chaplaincy is £400 each.

Additional amounts shall be paid by the authorities concerned towards the pensions of each of the chaplains.

Please note: old Circuit boundaries have been retained on this list to ease the transition for the new Circuits.

# STIPENDS, ALLOWANCES AND SALARY LEVELS

Stipends, allowances and salaries for 2024 are to be agreed in November 2023.

Stipends and Allowances for 2023 are recorded below for ease of reference.

## (1) MINISTERIAL STIPENDS AND ALLOWANCES

### MINISTERS, INCLUDING PROBATIONERS

	Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland
<b>Point 1</b>		
Up to 10 years travelling	£27,945	€36,082
<b>Point 2</b>		
11 years travelling onwards	£29,342	€37,502
<b>Probationer Rate</b>	£25,405	€32,999

The Conference directs that the scale of allowances as set out below be paid with effect from 1st January 2023, as outlined:

### NORTHERN IRELAND

- (a) **Circuit and Connexional Mileage**
  - HM Revenue and Customs Rates
  - First 10,000 business miles 45.0p per mile
  - Over 10,000 business miles 25.0p per mile
- Motorcycle**
  - All business miles 24.0p per mile
- Bicycle**
  - All business miles 20.0p per mile
- (b) **Non-Stipendiary Ministers** As above
- (c) **Connexional and Conference travel** 25.0p per mile
- (d) **Retired Ministers – Allowances for Services of Worship**  
£40 minimum per service, plus travel at 45p per mile
- (e) **Light, Heat and Telephone (Landline, Mobile & Broadband)**  
See note below



## REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

- |   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| (a) <b>Fixed Car Allowance</b>  | €1854 per annum   |
| (b) <b>Circuit and Connexional Mileage</b>  |                   |
| Up to 25,000 km   | 27.55 cent per km |
| Over 25,000 km  | 21.36 cent per km |
| <b>Motorcycle</b>   |                   |
| All business miles  | 18 cent per km    |
| <b>Bicycle</b>  |                   |
| All business miles  | 15 cent per km    |
| (c) <b>Non-Stipendiary Ministers</b>  | As above          |
| (d) <b>Connexional and Conference travel</b>  | 20 cent per km    |
| (e) <b>Retired Ministers – Allowances for Services of Worship</b>   |                   |
| €50 minimum per service, plus travel at 31.69 cent per km   |                   |
| (f) <b>Light, Heat and Telephone (Landline, Mobile &amp; Broadband)</b>   |                   |
| 75% of Light, Heat, Landline, Broadband and Sim-only Mobile plans. Circuits should contribute towards the cost of a mobile handset, by local agreement.   |                   |
| The minister should declare, for tax purposes, any of the above payments that he or she considers to be over and above business use. For Light and Heat, business use should not exceed 25% of actual costs. It is the minister's responsibility to justify the percentage/amount declared as business use. |                   |

## MANSE HEAT AND LIGHT (NORTHERN IRELAND)

- (a) the minister is responsible for paying all the heat and light bills for the manse
- (b) from 1 July 2023 the TMEA is increased as follows: the circuit / society pays the minister a Taxable Manse Expense Allowance (TMEA) equivalent to 9% of Top Stipend i.e., 7% towards light and heat; and 2% towards telephone. For manses with above-average heating costs, a higher TMEA may be appropriate, by local arrangement.
- (c) the minister can (where appropriate) claim a deductible expense in making her/his annual tax return of up to 25% of actual costs for light and heat and an appropriate share of the telephone costs for business use. To support the claim, it is the minister's responsibility to justify the percentage / amount claimed for business use.
- (d) the circuit / society no longer pay the minister a non-taxable amount in respect of business use of the manse or telephone costs.

The Operations Manager to adjust annually the TMEA in line with the movement in Top Stipend.

The Connexional Expenses and Allowances Policy can be found on Teams, under MCI Resources, Policies and Procedures.

## (2) VOCATIONAL LAY EMPLOYEES: SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES

The scales that have been set down are the minimum for the post. Two levels have been established – for those with no qualifications and those who have qualifications for their post.

**Minimum Salary from 1st January 2023 (based on a 36-hour week)**

	<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>Republic of Ireland</b>
Level 1 (unqualified)	£23,737	€31,447
Level 2 (qualified)	£24,925	€32,622

### **Circuit or Departmental employees, Vocational Lay Workers or non-vocational employees facilitated through the Central Payroll Bureau**

Circuits, departments, etc. who employ Vocational Lay Workers who are paid through the Trustees Office are reminded that it is their responsibility to inform payroll@irishmethodist.org when there is any change to the amount being paid to their employee.

#### **1. Mileage Allowance**

Mileage should be paid at the same rates as for Ministers, outlined above.

#### **2. Other Allowances**

Circuits may wish to take other allowances into account for their Vocational Lay Employee. Examples of those which should be considered include: office expenses; telephone; out of pocket expenses; hospitality; training courses; resources. These should be paid in line with the expenses policy (which is available at [methodistchurchinireland.sharepoint.com](http://methodistchurchinireland.sharepoint.com) or by contacting Nicola Robinson (Head of Finance).

It is important to consider how these extra expenses will be met, and how the employee will have access to them. The payment of expenses can create tension, although it should be straightforward to set up a structure. Advice should be sought from Human Resources: [hr@irishmethodist.org](mailto:hr@irishmethodist.org)

## (3) LOCAL PREACHERS

### **Mileage Allowance**

Mileage should be paid at the same rates as for Ministers, outlined above.

## (4) CONNEXIONAL COMMITTEE EXPENSES

The Connexional Expenses and Allowances Policy can be found on Teams, under MCI Resources, Policies and Procedures

## IRISH METHODIST MINISTERS' RETIREMENT FUND

1. The Governance Board received the report and approved the scale of allowances.
2. The Governance Board re-appointed Rev Jeremy Nicoll as Ministerial Treasurer and Secretary and Mr Desmond Mitchell as Lay Treasurer.

### 3. ALLOWANCES

The scale of allowances from 1st April 2023 is as follows:

#### 1. Ministers

- (a) The allowance for retired ministers shall be £6,753 in Northern Ireland and €8,027 in the Republic of Ireland.
- (b) A supplementary allowance shall be paid to those who by reason of insufficient contributions are not eligible for the full Northern Ireland State Pension. This allowance shall be equal to the difference between the State Pension (Northern Ireland or the Republic) actually received and the pre-2016 Northern Ireland basic pension.

#### 2. Ministers' widows / widowers

- (a) The allowance for ministers' widows/widowers shall be £6,089 in Northern Ireland and €7,260 in the Republic of Ireland.
- (b) A supplementary allowance shall be paid to those who by reason of insufficient contributions are not qualified for a full Northern Ireland State Pension. This allowance shall be equal to the amount of the difference between the State Pension (Northern Ireland or the Republic) actually received and the pre-2016 Northern Ireland basic pension for a single person.
- (c) Increased State Pensions are payable to qualifying widows/widowers for a period after their spouse's death provided this is applied for promptly. Increased allowances at the same rate shall be paid by the fund to widows/ widowers who do not qualify for the increased State Pension.

#### 3. Other applications

Those who previously served as Circuit Ministers when the Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund was in operation and who reach the age of 65, may apply for an

allowance from the Fund. The categories of Ministers who are eligible, and the rules for calculating the amount to be paid, are set out in the Minutes of Conference, 2000, pages 46-48.

## **Methodist Church in Ireland Retirement Benefits Scheme (1984)**

1. The Governance Board received the report of the Retirement Benefits Scheme.
2. Up to five trustees shall be member-nominated and the remainder shall be nominated by the Conference.
3. The following are the trustees: Mr Desmond Mitchell, Mr Harold Baird, Mr Stephen Knox, Rev Jeremy Nicoll, Member Nominated Trustees: Rev Andrew Boucher, Rev Kenneth Lindsay, Rev Dr Thomas McKnight.
4. Those nominated by the Conference are Mr Desmond Mitchell, Mr Harold Baird and Mr Stephen Knox, together with the Ministerial Secretary and Treasurer of the Irish Methodist Ministers Retirement Fund.
5. The Secretary of the Conference and Head of Finance shall be invited to attend trustee meetings.
6. **Provisions of the Scheme**
  - (1) *Normal Retirement Date*

For members who joined before 1st July 2020:  
1st July following the member's 65th birthday.

For members who joined on or after 1st July 2020:  
1st July following the member's 67th birthday.
  - (2) *Normal Retirement Pension*
    - (a) Members who joined the Scheme on 1st July 1984 (Scheme commencement date): 1% of final stipend x pensionable service, subject to a minimum of 38% of final stipend.
    - (b) Members who joined the Scheme after 1st July 1984: 1% of final stipend x pensionable service.
    - (c) Pension accrued on or after 1st July 1992 increases at the rate of 5% per annum or the annual increase in the Consumer Prices Index if less.
    - (d) Pension accrued on or after 1st July 2010 increases at the rate of 2.5% per annum or the annual increase in the Consumer Prices Index if less.
  - (3) *Cash lump sum*
    - (a) Members who joined the Scheme on 1st July 1984: 1.67% of final stipend x pensionable service subject to a minimum of two-thirds of final stipend.

- (b) Members who joined the Scheme after 1st July 1984: 1.67% of final stipend x pensionable service.
- (c) Lump sum accrued on or after 1st July 2010: 2% of final stipend x pensionable service.

(4) *Death in Service*

- (a) A lump sum of 2 times of Top Stipend.
- (b) Members under age 55: An additional lump sum of 6 times top stipend.

Members over age 55: A Spouse's Pension payable on death equal to the Member's Pension calculated using current Top Stipend and Potential Service to Normal Retirement Date.

- (c) A refund of the member's contribution.

(5) *Spouse's Benefit*

- (a) A pension of two-thirds of the ministerial pension.
- (b) If a minister dies within 5 years of his/her retirement, a lump sum equal to the discounted value of the remainder of the 5 years' instalments of pension will also be paid.

7. The IMMRF pays a discretionary Supplementary Pension to those pensioners whose RBS pension has fallen below the IMMRF.

8. Contributions are currently as follows:

- (a) The Circuit contribution is currently 20.3% of stipend (since January 2020). The Republic of Ireland Circuit contribution is based on this but changes depending on exchange rate fluctuations.
- (b) The members' contribution is currently 7.5% of stipend (since January 2020). The Republic of Ireland members' contribution is based on this but changes depending on exchange rate fluctuations.

9. The Conference indemnifies the trustees of the Retirement Benefits Scheme against any claims which may arise in the discharge of their responsibilities.

10. Pension Advisers:

ISIO Total Rewards and Benefits Ltd, 10 Norwich Street, London EC4A 1BD.

**11. Thanks to Rev Shaun R F Cleland**

The Conference records its thanks to Rev Shaun Cleland as he retires as a trustee of the RBS pension scheme. Shaun was the architect of the RBS scheme and worked on it for many years before its inception on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1984. He worked at that time with Bob Kerr who was a partner in the firm Sumner and McMillan, later becoming Kerr Henderson. Shaun had the task of encouraging ministers to move away from the "pay as you go" scheme to the RBS-funded one. The scheme accepted all those ministers who were in ministry and at least one day short of their 60th birthday on 1st July 1984. This he achieved with great success, negotiating difficulties along the

way. The church owes him a huge debt of gratitude for all that he did in this regard, and for his faithful work and wisdom as a Trustee for over 31 years.

## **Ministers' Absence Fund**

1. The Governance Board received the report of the Ministers' Absence Fund.
2. The Fund was set up in 1995 and enhanced in 1998 to provide defined financial support when a minister is unable, through sickness or disability, to perform the duties of the ministry. Details of benefits etc., are contained in the Minutes of Conference 1998, pages 43-44, paragraph 11. Additional changes noted below
3. In recognition of the different patterns of sickness and disability that have emerged in recent years, and to be more consistent with current practices in the workplace in general, the Conference agrees the following changes as to how we deal with Sickness and Disability:
  - a. In the event of disability or sickness, Ministers will be paid full stipend plus allowances by the Circuit to which they have been appointed for up to a total of thirteen weeks in any four-year period.
  - b. After this initial thirteen-week total has been reached, Ministers will be paid full stipend plus allowances from the Ministers' Absence Fund for up to a total of an additional thirteen weeks in any four-year period.
  - c. After both of these thirteen-week totals have been reached, Ministers will be paid fifty percent of stipend and fifty percent of allowances from the Ministers' Absence Fund for an additional twenty-six weeks in any four-year period.
  - d. Employee pension contributions are to be paid by the Minister.
  - e. All periods of disability or sickness are cumulative over a four-year period across any circuit or any jurisdiction.
  - f. Any additional periods of disability or sickness will be paid at Statutory Sick Pay rates, or equivalent.
  - g. All short term and long-term periods of sickness must be reported to the Operations Manager.
  - h. The Ministers' Absence Fund will continue to consider applications for Ill Health Retirement benefits in the event of diagnosis of a critical or terminal illness.
  - i. Ministers appointed to Departments of the Church will be treated in the same manner, with the Department fulfilling the obligations of a Circuit.

## **Methodist Ministers' Retirement Income Augmentation Fund**

1. The Governance Board approved the levels of minimum income in relation to the Augmentation Fund.

The Fund was set up in 2003 and ensures that ministers and widows/widowers should have a minimum income from all sources as set down by the Conference from year to year. The minimum income levels recommended as from 1 April 2023 are as follows: -

	Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland
Married couple	£21,598	€23,442
Widow/Widower	£18,207	€19,761

2. Eligibility and other criteria are detailed in the Minutes of Conference 2011, page 71.
3. Potential applicants should make contact with either of the two independent administrators:  
Ms Irene Dickson                      Tel: (028) 3832 6997  
Ms Marion Smith                         Mobile: 087 419 1602
4. In cases of need, the independent administrators can use their discretion to increase the benefits (consulting with the Audit, Risk and Budget Committee if necessary). In particular, this applies where an applicant's accommodation costs are higher than the minimum rent charged by the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society (25% of the IMMRF allowance).
5. The Conference refers to the Finance and Budget Sub-committee the determining of any question relating to special allowances.

### **Relationship of Ministers to the State Pension Schemes**

All ministers and probationers serving in Northern Ireland are members of the state pension scheme. The Conference directs that circuits and ministers/ probationers pay the employer's and employee's contributions respectively.

Ministers serving in the Republic of Ireland entered PRSI Class S as from April 1994.

# METHODIST MINISTERS' CHILDREN'S FUND

1. The Governance Board received the report.
2. The Governance Board re-appointed Rev Colin Milligan as Secretary and Ministerial Treasurer.
3. The Governance Board re-appointed Mr Stephen Knox as Lay Treasurer.
4. The Governance Board agreed that allowances for children should increase by 5% beginning from January 2023 and that from 1st July 2023, the extended benefits scheme for third level education will cease. Young people aged 18 and over in third level education will then instead be eligible for the maintenance grant for a period of up to 4 years.

## 5. MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCES

The Governance Board approved the level of allowances for the maintenance of eligible children for the Connexional year beginning 1 July 2023 as follows:

Northern Ireland	Secondary/Tertiary	£1,733
Northern Ireland	Primary & Preschool	£1,260
Republic of Ireland	Secondary/Tertiary	€2,783
	<i>If boarding</i>	€1,575
Republic of Ireland	Primary & Preschool	€2,021

## 6. EDUCATION ALLOWANCES

- (1) Allowances for school fees and books are available for children whose parents are stationed in the Republic of Ireland.
- (2) Education Allowances may be paid for school fees over €250 for any child attending second-level education at a school approved by the officers of the Fund. Support toward the cost of boarding education is only available where there is no suitable school within a reasonable distance as determined by the officers of the Fund.
- (3) The state grant must be applied for. The allowances for maintenance and/or education shall be subject to revision by the officers of the Fund depending upon the amount of aid received from the state grant.
- (4) A grant towards the cost of books, for any child not receiving free books in the Republic of Ireland, will paid as follows:
  - attending National School €105
  - attending Secondary School €315
- (5) Applications for educational allowances must be made within the year to which they apply.



# METHODIST MINISTERS' MEDICAL FUND

1. The Governance Board received the report
2. The Governance Board re-appointed the Rev Harold M Agnew as Secretary and Ministerial Treasurer.
3. The Governance Board re-appointed Mr David McCartney as Lay Treasurer of the Ministers' Medical Fund.

## 4. **Benefits of the Fund**

The Methodist Ministers' Medical fund shall provide grants in respect of:

- (a) Medical, dental and optical expenses of a minister, a dependent member of a minister's family, or a minister's widow/widower.
- (b) Funeral expenses on the death of a minister, a dependent member of a minister's family, or a minister's spouse.
- (c) Ministers 'without pastoral charge' in Ireland (other than those on Disability), and those 'permitted to serve' elsewhere, shall be considered to be outside the scope of the fund both in regard to contributions and benefits. A minister who has been given leave of absence for not more than four years may apply to have her/his case considered.
- (d) All ministers and ministers' widows/widowers are entitled to apply for a grant towards extraordinary expenditure. Applications should be made on the official application form available from the treasurers.
- (e) Any minister or minister's widow/widower anticipating an expenditure of over £500 (€1,000 in the Republic of Ireland) for any single treatment should consult with the officers beforehand if a grant is to be considered.

## 5. **Grants from the Medical Fund**

All Medical fund grants are authorised by Rev Harold Agnew (Ministerial Treasurer) and then second authorised and distributed to claimants by BACs payment from the Connexional Finance office. In accordance with the changes in MCI Governance, any issues now arising over grant payments are dealt with by referral to the Medical Fund sub-committee made up of the General Secretary, the Head of Finance, and the Ministerial and Lay Treasurers of the Fund.

All applications are made by completing the claim form available from the Ministerial Treasurer by email or from the MCI website. Completed forms together with all receipts should be returned to the Rev Harold Agnew by post or email.

The following regulations shall be operative regarding grants from the fund:

### (a) **Optical Grants**

- (i) Glasses: That a maximum of £155 and €245 be paid towards any single prescription. Normally a minimum period of two years must elapse between prescriptions unless otherwise medically directed. The cost of an eye test (if you have to pay for one) is also covered.
- (ii) Contact lenses: Grants towards contact lenses instead of glasses will be paid up to the maximum amounts outlined above for each prescription.

- (iii) Disposable contact lenses: Grants will be paid at 50% of cost up to the maximum amounts outlined above for each prescription in any two-year period.
- (b) **Funeral Grants**  
The Funeral Grant shall be £1,000 in Northern Ireland and €1,700 in the Republic of Ireland
- (c) **Dental Grants**
  - (i) The fund will pay 75% of dental claims up to £500 in Northern Ireland, and 70% of claims up to €1,000 in the Republic of Ireland for any course of treatment. Claims for proposed higher expenditure shall be treated as under 4 (e) above.
  - (ii) Ministers living in Northern Ireland shall always seek dental treatment from an NHS dentist. If no NHS dentist can be found in the home area, grants will be considered towards the cost of treatment provided using a basic private dental plan. Officers of the fund must be consulted before signing up for any private dental plan.
  - (iii) Grants towards orthodontic work will be considered for reasons recommended by a dentist, other than for solely cosmetic purposes. Grants will be considered on the same basis as under (c) (i) above.
  - (iv) Grants towards cosmetic dentistry are not allowed.
- (d) **Medical Fees and Prescriptions**
  - (i) The fund will pay 75% of claims for medical fees and prescription charges up to €1,500 in the Republic of Ireland in any calendar year. Any proposed higher expenditure shall be treated as under 4 (e) above.
  - (ii) Those in the Republic of Ireland who need regular prescription expenditure should apply through the Drug Refund Scheme.
  - (iii) In Northern Ireland grants for up to 75% of medical fee expenditure will be considered in any calendar year. Currently in Northern Ireland all prescription charges are free.
  - (iv) All applications for grants toward medical fees for courses of physiotherapy or other therapies will be considered only when such courses of treatment are prescribed by a doctor. The basis for such a grant will be 50% of expenditure incurred for a course of treatment in any calendar year.
- (e) **Extra Expenses incurred during illness**  
Claims from ministers for extra expenses incurred because of illness shall be made to the Fund in the usual way.
- (f) **Hospital Treatment/Private Health Schemes or Treatment**
  - (i) Ministers who have entered hospital shall avail themselves of the benefits provided by the health service in our respective jurisdictions, and any grant given or expenses allowed, shall be made on this basis.
  - (ii) The fund does not support any private health schemes. In exceptional circumstances a grant may be considered towards expenditure for a private initial consultation. Grants cannot be given towards any subsequent private treatment.

# METHODIST CHILD CARE SOCIETY

## Criteria for support

The criteria used to assess applications are as follows:

1. The maximum age limit is normally 18 years.
2. Families whose sole means of income are state benefits qualify automatically for financial support from the Society, as this is taken as an indicator of need.
3. All other cases are considered on the basis of individual circumstances.

The Society welcomes applications for financial support. Application forms can be obtained from Rev David J Sweeney, Ministerial Treasurer/Secretary or Mrs Margaret Copeland, Lay Treasurer, or from the IMYC page on the Irish Methodist website ([www.irishmethodist.org](http://www.irishmethodist.org)).

## Grants and bonus payments

The current annual grant for families is £880 (NI) or €1420 (RoI).

In addition, along with the June and December grants, a maximum bonus payment of £180 (NI) or €230 (RoI) may be paid for each child on the Roll.

1. The Governance Board received the report.
2. The Governance Board re-appointed Rev David Sweeney as Ministerial Treasurer/Secretary of the Methodist Child Care Society.
3. The Governance Board re-appointed Ms Margaret Copeland as Lay Treasurer of the Methodist Child Care Society.
4. The Governance Board directed that a copy of the Rules of the Society shall accompany the first payment to beneficiaries.
5. The Governance Board directed that an annual review shall be made concerning the circumstances of every family receiving benefit and the completed forms be returned to the Lay Treasurer as soon as possible after receipt.
6. The Governance Board directed that Circuits shall have an annual collection for the funds of the Society and that the monies collected shall be sent to the Lay Treasurer not later than 15th January.
7. The Governance Board directed that Circuits shall give serious consideration to the Gift Aid Scheme in Northern Ireland and the Tax Relief Scheme in the Republic of Ireland for their financial contributions.

Envelopes enabling Circuits to fully utilise the Gift Aid and Tax Relief schemes are available from the Society Officers and the IMYCD office. Donations to the Society by Standing Order (using the form at the back of the information leaflet) are encouraged.

## COVENANT COUNCIL

1. The Governance Board received the Report of the Covenant Council
2. The Governance Board re-appointed the Rev Dr Heather Morris as Co-Chair of the Covenant Council.
3. The Governance Board appointed its representatives to the Covenant Council for the coming year as follows:
  - Rev Dr Heather Morris (Co-Chair)
  - Rev Andrew Dougherty
  - Ms Gillian Kingston
  - Rev Dr Janet Unsworth
  - Rev Dr Sahr Yambasu

## INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. The Governance Board received the report.
2. The Governance Board appointed the Inter-Church Relations Committee:  
The General Secretary (Secretary of Conference), Rev Robert Cooper (Chair),  
Ms Gillian M Kingston (Convener), Ms Tina Barnett, Rev Andrew J Dougherty,  
Rev Louise McKee, Mr Robert Watson.
3. The Governance Board appointed the following as representatives:  
Churches Together in Britain and Ireland – Four Nations Forum:  
The General Secretary.  
Irish Council of Churches:  
To be appointed by the General Secretary in consultation with the Convener.  
Irish Inter-Church Meeting:  
The General Secretary

## MINISTRY OF HEALING

1. The Governance Board received the report.
2. The Governance Board re-appointed Rev Mark Durrell as Chair.
3. The Governance Board re-appointed Rev Mark Durrell as its representative on the Churches' Council for Health and Healing in Ireland.
4. The Governance Board re-appointed Dr Chris Mathison as Secretary to the Committee.
5. The Governance Board designates Sunday 4th February 2024 as Ministry of Healing Sunday.
6. The Governance Board designated the following members of the Ministry of Healing Committee for the ensuing year:  
The President, the Lay Leader, Secretary of Conference, Rev Mark Durrell (Chair), Dr Chris Mathison (Secretary), Mr Neilson Wylie, Ms Hazel Baird, Ms Patricia Lindsay, Rev Alan Conly, Rev Colin Duncan and Rev Mark Forsyth.  
Entitled to attend; The ex-President, the President Designate, the Lay Leader Designate.
7. The Governance Board appointed Rev Colin Duncan as its representative on the Spiritual Abuse Working Group.
8. The Governance Board directs the Ministry of Healing Committee to explore the role of the Committee, in collaboration with the Connexional Safeguarding Board, in providing guidance for healing of Spiritual Abuse.

## PRISON & HEALTHCARE CHAPLAINCY

1. The Governance Board received the report.
2. The Governance Board on behalf of the Conference affirms the valuable contribution made by all chaplains, paid and voluntary. In particular, the long service of Mrs Joan Parkinson was acknowledged. Joan retired in January 2023, having served as chaplain at Hydebank Wood College and Women's Prison and as a Committee member for many years.

Conference records its thanks to Joan Parkinson for her work as chaplain at Hydebank Wood College and Women's Prison. In her utter commitment to the students and women Joan lived out the truth of God's love for all. Joan went beyond every call of duty so that the lives of those with whom she worked might be enriched for the sake of God's Kingdom.

3. The Governance Board on behalf of the Conference expresses continued gratitude to the Joseph Rank Trust, Donegall Square Trust, MWI, Victoria Homes Trust, VINCI UK Foundation and other donors for their generous financial support.
4. The Governance Board appointed the Committee as follows:  
Rev Harold M Agnew, Rev Kenneth Connor, Rev Derek J Johnston (Secretary),  
Rev Tanita Lee, Rev John C Wonnacott, Mr Kevin Devlin, Ms Brenda Duncan,  
Mr Philip Larragy, Mr John Warren (Chair)

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

1. The Governance Board received the report.
2. The Governance Board appointed the Board for the 2023-2024 Connexional year as follows:  
The President, the Lay Leader, the Secretary of Conference, the President Designate,  
The Officers of the Board,  
General Secretary and Convenor of the Northern Executive: Dr Anita Gracie  
Ministerial Treasurer and Convenor of the Southern Executive: Rev Nigel D Mackey  
Lay Treasurer: Mr J Kenneth Twyble  
The General Secretary of the Irish Methodist Youth and Children's Team:  
Ms Gillian Gilmore  
Together with: Rev Andrew Dougherty, Rev Dr Julian Hamilton, Rev Alan G Wardlow, Ms Tina Barnett, Ms Linda Magowan, Mr Stephen Orr, Mr Charles Payne, Ms S Rosemary Rainey, Dr Ian Taylor, and Ms Daphne Wood.
3. The Governance Board endorsed the following appointments as representatives to the Transferor Representatives' Council: Dr Anita Gracie, Ms S Rosemary Rainey, Mr J Kenneth Twyble.
4. The Governance Board re-appointed Ms S Rosemary Rainey to the Education Authority (NI).
5. The Governance Board re-appointed Mr J Kenneth Twyble to the Controlled Schools' Support Council.
6. Nominations: The Governance Board directed the Board of Education to nominate representatives of the Methodist Church in Ireland on the Boards of Governors/Management of Schools or any succeeding bodies. The appointment of Transferor Representatives shall continue to be made as heretofore.
7. Ulster Royal Schools: The Governance Board re-appointed the following representatives of the Methodist Church on the Protestant Local Boards for the coming year:  
Local Board of Armagh: Mr Henry McMullan  
Local Board of Tyrone: Ms Susan McQueen  
Local Board of Fermanagh: Mr Peter M C Little.
8. The Governance Board re-appointed Ms Daphne Wood as Methodist Observer on the Church of Ireland Board of Education.
9. The Governance Board appointed Mr Stuart Blytheman and Mr David Lee as the Representatives of the Methodist Church on the Secondary Education Committee for Protestant Schools in the Republic of Ireland.

10. The Governance Board strongly recommends that each Society observes an Education Sunday annually. It is suggested that 10th September 2023 or an appropriate Sunday be observed as Education Sunday. Full resources can be found at: [cte.org.uk/education-sunday](http://cte.org.uk/education-sunday)
11. The Governance Board acknowledges the dedication and commitment of the teaching workforce in schools and colleges throughout Ireland and asks churches to prayerfully ways in which they can support local schools to provide for the educational needs of their pupils in light of the ongoing cuts to schools' budgets.



# CITY MISSIONS

## Dublin Central Mission

1. The Governance Board received the report.
2. The Governance Board appointed the Board of Directors of Dublin Central Mission DAC, incorporating the Mission Committee:

Rev Dr Laurence A M Graham (Superintendent of the Mission and Chairman of the Board) (8), Mr Varghese Arangathuparambil (Company Secretary) (12), Ms Niamh Carruthers (0), Mr Stuart Ferguson (1), Dr Christ Healy (0), Mr Trevor Holmes (5), Mr Ian Johnston (1), Mr John Kingston (1), Mr Ian Moore (0), Mr Tony O'Connor (0), Ms Anne-Marie O'Grady (1) and Mr Robert Wolfe (5), with power to co-opt within the terms of the Articles of Association.

Ms Suzanne Corcoran is the Chief Executive Officer Dublin Central Mission DAC and Ms Karena O'Sullivan is the Finance Director.

## North West Methodist Mission

1. The Governance Board received the report.
2. The Governance Board noted the Membership of the NWMM Board as follows:

Rev Dr Stephen Skuce (NW District Superintendent and Superintendent of the NWMM), Ms Tracy Hegarty (Vice Chair), Ms Joan Doherty (Secretary), Mr Mark Johnston (Treasurer), Mr John Gibson, Ms Marion Hamilton, Dr Peter Leeson, Mr Joe Lusby, Ms Janice McCandless and Ms Lena Wray.

## Newtownabbey Methodist Mission

1. The Governance Board received the report
2. The Governance Board appointed the Mission Council as follows:

Superintendent of the Mission: Rev Karen Spence, Ms Pat Jamison & Ms Pauline Stewart (Society Stewards), Mr Glenn Russell (Treasurer), Ms Catherine McFerran (Council Secretary), Mr James Blair (Property Steward),

Elected members: Ms Carmen Bailie, Mr Brian Black, Ms Anna Blair, Mr Ray Cahoon, Ms Heidi Chambers, Mr Stephen Cummings, Ms Marie King, Ms Phyllis McElhinney, Ms Naomi McGuckin

Retired Minister assisting: Rev Ivan McElhinney

## **Belfast Central Mission**

1. The Governance Board received the report.
2. The Governance Board noted that the members of Belfast Central Mission Ltd as of the last AGM are as follows:

Rev David Campton (Superintendent), Ms Margaret Adams, Mr Rowan Black, Mr Alan Cavan, Ms Jennifer Cavan, Dr David Gallagher, Mr David Gault, Rev Emily Hyland, Rev Andrew Irvine, Ms Eileen Jamison, Mr Glenn Massey, Ms Helen McHugh, Rev June Parke, Dr Ian Taylor and Ms Maureen Swinton.

The following have been appointed by the Members, according to the Articles of Association of Belfast Central Mission to be Directors:

Mr Rowan Black (Chair), Rev David Campton (Superintendent), Mr Paul Clarke, Ms Margaret Copeland, Ms Jo Dwyer, Mr Doug Edmondson (Treasurer), Mr David Ferguson, Dr David Gallagher (Minutes Secretary), Ms Shelagh McCaughan, Mr Gordon Robinson, Rev Stephen Sheerin, \_\_\_\_\_.

## **East Belfast Mission**

1. The Governance Board received the report.
2. The following are nominated as Directors for appointment according to the Articles of Association of East Belfast Mission:

Rev Brian B Anderson (Chair), Mr Iain Colville, Mr Stephen Curragh, Ms Linda Hopley, Mr Daniel Jackson, Mr Brian Maxwell, Ms Gail Mercer, Mr Jamie Watson and Mr Derek Wylie.

## IRISH METHODIST YOUTH & CHILDREN'S TEAM

1. The Connexional Team received the report.
2. The Governance Board endorsed continued involvement in Youth Link.  
The following are to act as representatives: Ms Gillian Gilmore, Rev Philip Patterson and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The Governance Board re-appointed Ms Gillian Gilmore as General Secretary.
4. The Governance Board re-appointed Rev Fiona McCrea as Chair of the Connexional Youth & Children's Advisory Group.
5. The Governance Board directed that all circuits/churches consult with IMYC and MCI Human Resources when considering employing a youth worker, children's worker or family worker.
6. Safeguarding  
Conference directs that every volunteer, office holder or paid employee in the Methodist Church in Ireland who works with children, young people or vulnerable adults:
  - must undergo the relevant, appropriate police vetting procedures. These checks are provided by AccessNI in Northern Ireland and the National Vetting Bureau in the Republic of Ireland and are facilitated by the Methodist Church in Ireland. Those working in both jurisdictions will be subject to checks by both authorities
  - must be re-vetted at least every three years by the Methodist Church in Ireland, and
  - must attend Safeguarding Training provided by the Methodist Church in Ireland once every three years.
7. Training and Development  
The Governance Board strongly recommends to Circuits that all those who work with children or young people undertake a comprehensive programme of training. Current training opportunities are made available through IMYC's social media and emailed to all those on their database. Anyone wishing to be included in these emails can fill in the form at <https://irishmethodist.org/imyc>  
Training is also available on request by contacting IMYC at [imyc@irishmethodist.org](mailto:imyc@irishmethodist.org)
8. The Governance Board on behalf of the Conference recorded its thanks to a member of staff who is moving to a new role:  
**Gemma Barclay**  
Youth Ministry Coordinator, Gemma Barclay's involvement began in volunteer roles, followed by Team on Mission. She then trained and worked as a youth worker and joined IMYC staff team in 2016.  
Her passion to see young people understand who they are in God, develop and use their gifts and skills for the Kingdom, has been her motivation over these years, as she led the Team On Mission programme, and developed the Overflow young

leaders' weekend. She was involved in Autumn Soul worship planning and the Castlewellan youth team as well as encouraging and resourcing, volunteer and employed youth and children's leaders. Her heart, vision, expertise, creativity, and ability to build relationships and community, as she empowered others was greatly appreciated, and will be missed.

The whole Connexion will pray God's blessing on Gemma as she takes up her new role with the 24-7 Ibiza Prayer Team.

# THE HOME MISSION TEAM

1. The Connexional Team received the report.
2. The Governance Board wholeheartedly supports the Connexional Team's encouragement to members to prioritise prayer by developing rhythms of prayer for their local church, as well as promoting and attending District and Connexional prayer gatherings throughout the year.
3. The Governance Board, on the advice of the Connexional Team expresses thanks:
  - to all those who have made special donations and bequests to the Department.
  - to members of congregations who have made contributions though Gift Aid and Income Tax rebates.
  - to all those who voluntarily engage in and support Mission projects around Ireland.
  - the Joseph Rank Trust, the Benefact Trust and other grant making bodies for their generous support to the Irish Methodist Church
4. The Connexional Team resolves that in cases of vacancies in Stations and rearrangement of Circuits, the Officers of the Fund shall have authority to adjust the grants to the Circuits concerned.
5. **Home Mission Collections, Accounts and Applications for Grants**

The Governance Board, on the advice of the Connexional Team, directs:

  - that all collections and subscriptions for the Fund shall, **immediately on their receipt** by the Circuit Treasurer or Superintendent, be forwarded to Methodist Home Mission, Edgehill House, 9 Lennoxvale, Belfast BT9 5BY and that cheques should be made payable to 'Methodist Home Mission Fund'. **Online payment options are preferred**, and details will be the provided in the Home Mission Sunday Resource pack.
  - that Sunday 19th November 2023 be observed as Home Mission Sunday and that as far as possible the Home Mission resources prepared for that Sunday be made known and available to Societies at least two weeks in advance.
  - that all Circuits arrange Home Mission services with speakers from another Circuit and/or even a different District if possible.
  - that Circuit Accounts for Home Missions be closed by 14th January 2024 and that Schedules and remittances be forwarded to: Methodist Home Mission, Edgehill House, 9 Lennoxvale, Belfast BT9 5BY.
  - that all applications for grants for the calendar year 2024 be sent to the relevant District Superintendent not later than 4th September 2023.
  - that applications follow the guidelines provided by the Department and are accompanied by a full set of Circuit accounts and a detailed budget for 2024, showing how any grant will be used.
6. The Governance Board appointed Kathryn Harte as General Secretary of the Home Mission Team.
7. The Governance Board appointed Rev Mark Forsyth as Chair of the Connexional Home Mission Advisory Group.

## MINISTRIES TEAM

1. The Connexional Team and the Governance Board received the report.
2. The Governance Board re-appointed Rev Dr Janet Unsworth as the Director of the Ministries Team.
3. The Governance Board agreed the reviewed and /or revised Ministries Policies and Procedures listed below  
These are available on MCI Teams at MCI Resources/Policies and Procedures.
  - Authorisations to Preside at Holy Communion Policy
  - Local Preacher Nomination, Appointment and Review Policy
  - Ministry Development and Further Study Grants Policy
  - Ordained Ministers Applications to Serve With and Transfer To
  - Ordained Ministry Context-based Formation Protocols
  - Ordained Ministry Continuing Ministry Development Policy
  - Ordained Ministry by Married Couples Policy
  - Ordained Ministers Obituary Policy
  - Ordained Ministers Parental Leave Policy
  - Ordained Ministers Retirement Policy
  - Ordained Ministers Sabbaticals Policy
  - Ordained Ministers Separated Appointments
  - Ordained Ministers Serving as Mission Partners Policy
  - Ordained Ministers Special Applications Policy
  - Ordained Ministry Time Wisdom
  - Ordained Ministers Withdrawal from and Reinstatement to Ministry Policy
4. The Governance Board, on the recommendation of the Connexional Team, adopted the revised version of Chapter 6A of the Manual of Laws, as set out in Appendix 7B.
5. The Governance Board re-appointed Ms Laura Griffith as Connexional Co-ordinator for Local Preachers.
6. The Governance Board appointed the Connexional Local Preachers Committee as follows: The Lay Leader of the Conference, The Connexional Local Preachers' Co-ordinator, A member of staff of the Ministries Team and The District Local Preachers' Co-ordinators.
7. The Governance Board appointed the Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee for the Connexional Year 2023-24:

Chairperson: Rev Robin Waugh

Vice-chairperson: Rev David Nixon

Director of the Ministries Team: Rev Dr Janet Unsworth

General Secretary: Rev Dr Heather Morris

Ministerial Psychological Assessor: Rev Alan Lorimer

Connexional Local Preachers' Co-ordinator: Ms Laura Griffith

A District Superintendent: Rev Philip Agnew

Up to four other members:

Mr Stephen Alford

Rev Alison Gallagher

Ms Norma Gallagher

Rev Alan Wardlow

8. The Governance Board appointed the Ministries Learning and Development Committee for the Connexional Year 2023-24:

Chairperson: Mr Mike Anderson

Director of the Ministries Team: Rev Dr Janet Unsworth

Learning and Development Officer: Ms Grace McGurk

Connexional Local Preachers' Co-ordinator: Ms Laura Griffith

Vice-chairperson of the Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee: Rev David Nixon

Up to six other members:

Ms Shirley Alexander

Rev Alison Gallagher

Rev Jordan Litchfield

Ms Dorothy McConnell

Dr Ian Taylor

Rev Darrin Thompson

# METHODIST WOMEN IN IRELAND

1. The Connexional Team received the report.
2. The Governance Board appointed the Central Forum as follows:

## General Executive:

All-Ireland MWI President: Ms Olive Rowe  
General Secretary: Ms Moira McMurray  
Senior Finance Officer: Ms Heidi Hogan  
Media Secretary: Ms Carmel Irwin  
World Mission Secretary: Ms Elizabeth McWatters  
World Federation Area Vice President: Ms Wanda Hogan  
Helen Kim Memorial Scholar: Ms Heidi Hogan  
World Federation Unit Correspondent: Ms Moira McMurray.  
Southern District Vice-President: Ms Wanda Hogan  
North Western Vice-President: Ms Maeve Wilson  
North Eastern Vice-President: Ms Alexa Brown

## Together with:

District Secretaries: Ms Barbara Fennell, Ms Catherine McIlroy and Ms Pam Dzunu.  
District Treasurers: Ms Barbara Bryan, Ms Heather Gandola, Ms Maureen Young and

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District Mission Secretaries/World Federation Representatives: Ms Heidi Hogan,  
Ms Ruth Wilson, Ms Pam Dzunu.

## **Representatives to other Committees/Bodies outside the Methodist Church in Ireland**

Women's Link: Ms Elizabeth McWatters  
Women in Faith: Ms Liz Carville  
Women's Forum: Ms Joan Strong  
National Women's Council Ireland: Ms Sue Maxwell

3. **Thanks to Barbara Fennell who has retired after 9 years as MWI Treasurer.**

Barbara has been the lynchpin of the MWI General Executive during this period, working with five MWI Presidents. She has carried out her role in a competent and efficient manner. She has been the person with whom MWI District Treasurers liaise in respect of financial matters. Her considerable knowledge of the financial systems in both the sterling and euro accounts has been of particular benefit. Barbara will be missed from the MWI Executive team, and the Connexion wishes her well for the future.



# IRISH METHODIST WORLD DEVELOPMENT & RELIEF

1. The Connexional Team received the report.
2. The Governance Board, on the advice of the Connexional Team, reminds all Methodists of the directive to share at least 1% of post-tax income for the work of Word Development & Relief.
3. The Governance Board, on the advice of the Connexional Team, encourages Methodists to use the Gift Aid scheme in Northern Ireland and the Charities Tax Relief scheme in the Republic of Ireland.
4. The Governance Board, on the advice of the Connexional Team, recommends that each congregation hold a special Sunday service, using the prepared WDR service material in conjunction with their 1% Appeal.
5. The Governance Board, on the advice of the Connexional Team, encourages Methodists to support emergency appeals through additional giving and not by reducing their regular support of the long-term development work of our Irish Methodist partners.
6. The Governance Board, on the advice of the Connexional Team, directed that a proportion of income, determined by the committee is allocated to Christian Aid Ireland and All We Can.
7. **Thanks to Ms Beth Hand**  
Beth Hand has served the Connexion in the role of Secretary of the World Development and Relief Committee for 5 years. WDR has benefitted hugely from her compassion, and her contribution at meetings. The Connexion places on record its thanks for her service and wishes her well as she steps down from this role.
8. The Governance Board appointed the Committee as follows:
  - Convener: Rev Paul Maxwell
  - Treasurer: Mr Jonny Best
  - Members: Rev Andrew Robinson, Mr Patrick Mercer, Rev Edem Dzunuu, Ms Pat Jamison, Ms Lynne Barr, Mr Anton Scheele, Ms Sheila Donaghy, Mr Ollie Baird.
  - Ex officio: Rev Dr Laurence Graham (World Mission Partnership)
  - Advisors: Ms Laura Kerr (WDR Communications and Fundraising), Mr Tim Dunwoody (WDR Team Leader).

## WORLD MISSION PARTNERSHIP

1. The Connexional Team received the report.
2. The Governance Board, on the advice of the Connexional Team, approved the dates for Mission Advocacy as being 11th -18th February 2024.
3. The Governance Board on the advice of the Connexional Team requests Circuits to make plans for special services and advocacy at least once per year.
4. The Governance Board, on behalf of the Conference, recorded its appreciation of:
  - a) The Global Relationships team, London
  - b) The committees appointed by WMP
  - c) District World Mission Champions
  - d) The Ministerial and Lay Treasurers
  - e) The World Mission and Development Office staff.
5. The Governance Board requests that greetings be sent to those serving from Ireland as Mission Partners and Associates with the World Church: Barry and Gillian Sloan, Melissa Newell, Stephen McCann and Gemma Barclay.
6. The Governance Board recorded its appreciation of the work of MWI and JMA for their contributions to the General Fund and commends these funds for support.
7. The Governance Board requests Circuits to submit their financial contributions and schedules to WMP not later than 1st December each year.
8. The Governance Board re-appointed Rev Dr Laurence A M Graham as General Secretary of Irish Methodist World Mission Partnership.
9. The Governance Board re-appointed Rev Dr Sahr J Yambasu as Ministerial Treasurer of Irish Methodist World Mission Partnership.
10. The Governance Board re-appointed Mr Ian Patterson as Lay Treasurer of Irish Methodist World Mission Partnership.
11. The Governance Board re-appointed Rev Dr Laurence A M Graham and Rev Dr Sahr J Yambasu as representatives to Global Relationships, London.
12. The Governance Board appointed the Committee as follows:

General Secretary: Rev Dr Laurence A M Graham  
Ministerial Treasurer: Rev Dr Sahr J Yambasu  
Lay Treasurer: Mr Ian Patterson  
Members: Ms Judith Weir (Secretary), Ms Elizabeth McWatters (MWI),  
Rev Paul Maxwell (WDR), Rev Dr Janet Unsworth, Ms Pam Dzunu,  
Mr William Carson, \_\_\_\_\_ .  
Staff: Mr Tim Dunwoody (WMP Team Leader), Mr David Nesbitt (WMP Coordinator).

# **RESOLUTIONS from ASSOCIATED BODIES**

These bodies are not part of the charity which is the Methodist Church in Ireland, but are entities for whom MCI has some reporting or appointing responsibility.

## **WESLEY COLLEGE**

1. The Governance Board received the report of the Governors.
2. The Governance Board re-appointed Rev Nigel Mackey as Chaplain of the College.
3. The Governance Board appointed Mr Jonathan Lew as Honorary Treasurer.
4. The Governance Board appointed Grant Thornton as auditors.
5. The Governance Board appointed as Governors of the College the following:

The President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, The Principal of the College Mr Christopher Woods, Rev Michael Jones Rev Paul Maxwell, Rev Jeremy Nicoll, Rev Stephen Taylor, Rev Alan Wardlow, Mr Jason Campbell, Mr Rob Corbet, Ms Jean Delaney, Mr David English, Mr Simon Grier, Ms Gillian Kingston, Mr Jonathan Lew, Mr Alwin McAdoo, Ms Amanda McConnell, Ms Jennifer Moulton, Mr Clive Moutray, Mr Roy Parker, Mr Jonathan Parkes, Ms Joy Winterbotham.

## **METHODIST COLLEGE, BELFAST**

1. The Governance Board received the report.
2. The Governance Board re-appointed Rev Emily Hyland as Honorary Chaplain to the College.
3. The Governance Board re-appointed the following as Trustee Governors who retire by rotation but are eligible for re-election: Rev Dr John Alderdice and Prof Alan Strong.

## **GURTEEN COLLEGE**

1. The Governance Board received the report.
2. The Governance Board re-appointed Mr Robert Armitage as Treasurer of the College
3. The Governance Board noted RBK (Russell Brennan Keane) as Auditors
4. The Governance Board appointed as Governors of the College the following:  
Mr Robert Armitage, Ms Margaret Berry, Ms Eimear Burke Mr Denis Duggan, Mr Jim Dwyer, Mr Joe Healy, Mr Roy Kingston (Chair), Ms Bridget Lynch, Mr Alan McCormack, Dr Finola McCoy, Rev Paul Maxwell, Ms Caitriona Murphy, Mr Alan Ralph, Ms Julie Roche and Mr Tomás Russell.
5. The following are Trustees: Mr John Armitage, Ms Lucy Bateman, Mr James Bennett (Chair), Mr Robert Davis, Rev Laurence Graham, Rev Andrew Kingston, , Rev Denis Maguire, Mr Billy Nicholson, Mr Gordon Nicholson, Rev John Parkin, Mr Douglas Rowe, Mr Robin Smyth,
6. Rev Steven Foster is Chaplain to the College.

## **EASTWELL RESIDENTIAL HOME**

1. The Governance Board received the report of the Governors.
2. The Governance Board noted that the Governing Body of the Eastwell Residential Home has appointed the Committee as follows:

Chairman: Mr David Lee

Hon. Secretary: Ms Roisin Whiting

Treasurer: Mr Charles Richards

Representing the Annual General Meeting: Rev Andrew Kingston, Ms Iris Beatty

Representing the Dublin Societies:

Centenary, Leeson Park: Mr Charles Richards

Rathgar: Ms Wendy Moore

Dun Laoghaire: Ms Joan Harris

Sandymount: Mr Steven Smyrl

Clontarf: Ms Yvonne Seville

Dublin Central Mission: Ms Margaret Boles

Dundrum: Ms Margaret Payne

Sutton: Ms Margaret Thornes

Blackrock and Bray: Ms Heather Gandola

Tallaght: Ms Roisin Whiting

3. The Governance Board appointed the following to serve on the Governing Body: Rev Andrew Dougherty, Rev Stephen Taylor.

## **METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND**

1. The Governance Board received the report.
2. The Governance Board noted that the Methodist Historical Society Ireland has appointed the Committee for the ensuing year as follows:

Dr Fergus O'Ferrall, President; Rev Dr E T I Mawhinney, Vice-President;

Ms Jennifer Stutt, Secretary and Associate Archivist; Rev Robin P Roddie, Archivist;

Mr Derek Reid, Ms Trudy Reid, Treasurers; Rev Dr Stephen F Skuce, Editor;

Rev Dr John D Alderdice; Rev Colin D Gracie; Rev Brian D Griffin; Rev S Kenneth

Todd; Ms Margaret Clarke; Mr Steven C Smyrl; Dr Brian Turner; Dr Shelagh B Waddington; and Mr J R Wesley Weir.

3. The Governance Board noted with appreciation the work of the Society and recommends that every Society contribute to the funds of the Methodist Historical Society of Ireland.
4. The Governance Board encourages Methodists to join the Society.
5. The Governance Board directed that all documents no longer in current use, including printouts from electronic records, be lodged with a competent authority for safekeeping and future reference. For this purpose, it recommends the archives of the Methodist Historical Society of Ireland.

# Miscellaneous Resolutions

## 1. DIRECTOR OF MUSIC OF THE CONFERENCE

The Conference re-appoints Rev Ross J Harte as Director of Music.

## 2. PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Conference appoints the President's Advisory Committee for the ensuing year: The President, the Lay Leader, the General Secretary, Rev Brian B Anderson, Mr John Clarke, Ms Gillian Kingston and Rev David Nixon.

## 3. MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

1. The Conference appoints the Memorials Committee as follows:

The President, the Lay Leader, the General Secretary (Secretary of Conference), the Ex-President, Ms Gillian Kingston, Ms Hazel Loney, Rev John Montgomery, Rev Dr Janet M Unsworth, Convener: Rev John R Montgomery.

To this Committee shall be added the District Superintendent of any District from where a resolution is to be considered by the Committee. If unable to attend the District Superintendent shall nominate a substitute.

## 4. THANKS OF THE CONFERENCE TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE LAY LEADER

The warmest thanks of the Conference are expressed to the President and the Lay Leader for their valuable services rendered in all the Sessions and Services of the Conference.

## 5. THANKS OF THE CONFERENCE TO OTHERS

The Conference expresses cordial thanks to the following:

The Secretary, Assistant Secretaries, the Letter Writer, Scrutineers, Attesters, the Director of Music, the Organist, the Prayer Team, Stewards, those who provided flowers, the Conference Arrangements Committee, staff from Edgehill House, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and particularly the staff of the Assembly Buildings

## 6. INSURANCE OF TRUST PROPERTY

1. The Conference cordially thanks Methodist Insurance and Benefact Trust for the continued support for the Connexion.
2. The attention of Trustees is drawn to the desirability of, where possible, insuring all Trust Property with Methodist Insurance, especially in view of the fact that the Connexion benefits each year from a grant from the company's profits.

3. The Conference directs the attention of Trustees to the fact that all the liability, which Trustees ordinarily have in cases of accident at any of our meetings, still applies in cases where our property is used by other bodies.
4. The Methodist Insurance Company's contact telephone number is 0345 6061 331.

## The Conference of 2024

1. The Conference of 2023 set provisional dates for the Conference of 2024: 5th – 9th June, with the Service of Installation of the President and Lay Leader being held on Wednesday 5th June 2024.

2. **Conference Allocation**

The Allocation for Conference 2024 will be 116, constituted as follows.

- (I) **Ministers:**

The President of the British Conference and the presbyter(s) appointed by that Conference together with:

- (a) The President of the Methodist Church in Ireland
- (b) The General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland
- (c) The Ex-President of the Methodist Church in Ireland
- (d) The Assistant Secretaries ~~of the preceding Irish Conference~~
- (e) The District Superintendents.

Along with

- (f) All stationed ministers in Full Connexion with the Irish Church.
- (g) All ministers who are in Full Connexion, who have permission to be without stationed appointment or to serve with other bodies and who are not retired.
- (h) Covenant partnership ministers who are stationed in Covenant Partnership Churches.
- (i) Ministers who have filled the office of President of the Church prior to 1995; after 1995 ministers who have filled the office of President of the Church following the completion of their Presidential year for a period of four years.
- (j) Retired ministers in Full Connexion to make the number to 116 elected by ministers in Full Connexion.

Ordinands will still attend.

- (II) **Lay Members**

- (a) The Lay Leader of the Conference.
- (b) Any Lay Assistant Secretary(s) of the Conference.
- (c) The District Lay Leaders.
- (d) Circuit Representatives according to the following allocation
  - Circuits with 1-300 members: 1 Representative
  - Circuits with 300-600 members: 2 Representatives
  - Circuits with more than 600 members: 3 Representatives.

- (e) Lay Representatives to be elected by the Committees of the following Funds and Institutions:
- World Mission Partnership
  - Methodist Youth and Children's Team
  - World Development and Relief
  - Council on Social Responsibility (2)
  - The Faith and Order Committee (2)
  - Methodist Women in Ireland (2)
  - The Statutory Trustees
  - Local Preachers'
  - Ministries Team
  - Prison and Healthcare Chaplaincy
  - Inter-Church Relations
  - Home Mission Team
  - Property Board
  - Board of Education
  - Irish Methodist Ministers Retirement Fund
  - Ministers' Children's Fund
  - Childcare Society
  - Audit, Risk and Budget Committee of the Governance Board.
- (f) 3 Youth Representatives from each District
- (g) The Lay members of the Governance Board
- (h) Three representatives nominated by the Pioneer Mission Team.
- (i) Lay Representatives elected by the Governance Board in such numbers, with the foregoing, to complete the number required.

DAVID L TURTLE, President  
HEATHER M E MORRIS, Secretary  
June 2023



# APPENDICES

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## APPENDIX 1

# Connexional Calendar 2023-2024

## 2023

### September

6	Connexional Team (10.00am-1.00pm)
6	Stationing Sub-group (2.00pm)
10	Education Sunday
13	Faith and Order Committee (6.30pm)
14	Governance Board (10.00am-4.00pm)
15-17	MWI Fellowship weekend in Drumalis
19	Stationing Sub-group (3.00pm)
21	Property Board (7.30pm)
29	Board of Education, Northern Executive (4.00pm)
30	MWI General Executive Meeting (10.30am) Portadown

### October

16	Governance Board (10.00am-4.00pm)
17	Connexional Team (2.00-5.00pm) online
21	World Federation meeting [WFMUW] Dublin
27-29	Autumn Soul

### November

13	Trustees Standing Committee (online)
19	Home Mission Sunday
22	Connexional Team (2.00-5.00pm)
22	Faith and Order Committee (6.30pm)
23	Governance Board (10.00am-4.00pm)
27	Trustees General Meeting (Edgehill House)

### December

8	MWI All-Ireland Carol Service (7.30pm) online
14	Governance Board (10.00am)

# 2024

## January

- 7 Covenant Sunday
- 11 Connexional Team (10.00am-1.00pm) online
- 18 Governance Board (10.00am-4.00pm)
- 18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- 21 Social Responsibility Sunday
- 20 MWI General Executive Meeting
- 28 Racial Justice Sunday

## February

- 4 Ministry of Healing Sunday
- 9 Board of Education, Northern Executive (4.00pm)
- 9-11 'Overflow' Young Leaders' Weekend
- 11-18 World Mission Advocacy Week
- 15 Governance Board (10.00am-4.00pm)
- 21 Connexional Team (2.00-5.00pm)

## March

- 1 World Day of Prayer
- 8-10 Soul Mates
- 9 MWI Central Forum
- 12 Tributes & Obituaries Committee
- 14 Governance Board (10.00am-4.00pm)
- 21 Trustees AGM (12.00noon) online
- 21 Property Board (7.30pm)

## April

- 16 Connexional Team (2.00-5.00pm) online
- 18 Governance Board (10.00am-4.00pm)

## May

- 4 MWI General Executive Meeting
- 12-18 Christian Aid Week
- 21 Connexional Team (2.00-5.00pm)
- 23 Governance Board (10.00am-4.00pm)
- 24 Board of Education, Northern Executive (4.00pm)

## June

- 5 Conference opens
- 24 Connexional Team (10.00am-1.00pm)



The Methodist Church in Ireland	Dec.21	New	Rec.	Rem.	Emi.	Dth.	Csd.	Dec.22	+/-	Jun.	+/-	Cong.	+/-	Total	+/-
<b>North Western District</b>															
16. Enniskillen	433	8	1	0	0	15	0	427	-6	68	-12	40	-86	535	-104
17. Springfield and Churchill	118	2	0	0	0	0	0	120	2	41	3	40	0	201	5
18. Lisbellaw, Maguirebridge, & Tempo	232	0	0	0	0	0	0	232	0	125	0	114	0	471	0
19. Upper Erne	197	51	0	0	0	5	0	243	46	42	-6	67	-5	352	35
20. Fivemiletown	78	6	0	0	0	1	0	83	5	31	-6	58	-4	172	-5
21. Pettigo & Irvinestown	109	0	0	0	0	18	91	-18	41	0	101	-39	233	-57	
22. Ballinamallard & Trillick	167	0	0	0	0	5	0	162	-5	77	10	159	-1	398	4
23. North Connacht & Longford	133	20	0	0	1	5	25	122	-11	78	-34	146	23	346	-22
24. Londonderry, Inishowen, Limavady & Stra	285	8	0	0	0	8	18	267	-18	142	-58	400	-19	809	-95
25. Castlederg	255	0	0	0	0	0	0	255	0	69	0	80	0	404	0
26. Omagh & Fintona	305	7	0	0	0	3	0	309	4	50	4	70	0	429	+8
27. Donegal, Ballintra & Inver	177	0	0	0	0	2	6	169	-8	45	2	29	13	243	7
28. Dunkineely & Ardara	133	4	0	0	0	1	0	136	3	39	1	64	0	239	4
29. Portadown	406	4	0	0	0	0	0	410	4	250	-82	562	-78	1222	-156
30. Newry	82	0	0	0	0	3	0	79	-3	14	0	17	-1	110	-4
31. Charlemont & Cranagill	95	0	0	0	0	0	17	78	-17	55	-5	35	-143	168	-165
32. Dungannon	180	7	0	0	0	2	2	183	3	56	-12	96	-3	335	-12
33. Cookstown & South Derry	129	0	0	0	0	2	0	127	-2	34	3	72	1	233	2
34. Armagh	77	3	3	0	0	1	0	82	5	30	9	58	-2	170	+12
35. Aughnacloy & Monaghan	74	6	0	0	0	3	1	76	2	12	-6	8	0	96	-4
36. Lurgan	279	5	0	0	0	3	3	278	-1	85	0	221	17	584	16
37. Glenavy & Moira	188	3	0	0	0	3	0	188	0	103	2	94	-2	385	0
38. Maghaberry	288	13	0	0	0	3	298	10	120	8	0	0	0	418	18
39. Tandragee & Richhill	114	93	0	0	0	0	0	207	93	87	9	168	-50	462	52
40. Banbridge & Donadoney	146	0	0	0	2	8	0	136	-10	95	-9	236	+10	467	-9
<b>Dec-22</b>	<b>4680</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>4758</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>1789</b>	<b>-179</b>	<b>2935</b>	<b>-369</b>	<b>9482</b>	<b>-470*</b>
Net increase in Membership		<b>78</b>													
Net decrease in total Methodist Community		<b>-470*</b>													

The Methodist Church in Ireland	Dec.21	New	Rec.	Rem.	Emi.	Dth.	Csd.	Dec.22	+/-	Jun.	+/-	Cong.	+/-	Total	+/-
<b>North Eastern District</b>															
41. Coleraine, Portrush, Portstewart & Ballyr	185	0	0	0	0	1	0	184	-1	40	1	148	0	372	0
42. Newtownabbey Mission	619	20	0	0	0	23	8	608	-11	516	-200	1938	-262	3062	-473
43. Ballyclare	142	0	0	0	0	0	0	142	0	90	0	547	0	779	0
44. Carrickfergus	481	19	0	0	0	16	0	484	3	133	-8	787	-322	1404	-327
45. Lame	206	6	0	0	0	10	9	193	-13	175	-12	565	-6	933	-31
46. Antrim	76	0	0	0	0	0	0	76	0	12	0	0	0	88	0
47. Ballymena	97	5	0	0	0	3	12	87	-10	22	-7	215	5	324	-12
48. Cullybackey	156	0	0	0	0	3	0	153	-3	116	0	291	0	560	-3
49. North Belfast & Greater Shankil	333	0	0	0	0	0	14	319	-14	209	2	1058	-174	1586	-186
50. Belfast South & Central	235	1	0	2	0	9	28	197	-38	20	-6	91	-24	308	-68
51. Belfast (Ballynafeigh)	186	1	0	0	0	11	2	174	-12	28	-4	195	-4	397	-20
52. Belfast East	1062	14	4	3	0	27	21	1029	-33	354	-16	2083	-23	3466	-72
53. Belfast (Finaghy & Seymour Hill	178	0	0	0	0	6	0	172	-6	72	1	353	-56	597	-61
54. Bangor & Holywood	603	4	0	3	0	25	30	549	-54	249	2	848	-192	1646	-244
55. Donaghadee	75	0	0	0	0	1	6	68	-7	9	0	78	-24	155	-31
56. Newtownards, Movilla Abbey &	350	9	0	0	0	10	6	343	-7	138	-15	559	41	1040	19
57. Glastry & Portaferry	98	0	5	0	0	4	0	99	1	32	0	80	0	211	1
58. Lagan Valley & Sth Down	787	6	0	0	0	10	29	754	-33	234	-98	1043	-59	2031	-190
<b>Dec-22</b>	<b>5869</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>5631</b>	<b>-238</b>	<b>2449</b>	<b>-360</b>	<b>10879</b>	<b>-1100</b>	<b>18959</b>	<b>-1698</b>
Net Decrease in Membership		-238'													
Net Decrease in Total Methodist Community		-1698'													

## APPENDIX 3

# Names of Societies with District and Circuit Numbers

Abbey Street, Dublin	1/2	Blanchardstown	1/2
Adare	1/15	Bloomfield	3/52
Antrim	3/45	Bluestone	2/35
Ardara	2/28	Borrisokane	1/10
Arklow	1/6	Braniel	3/51
Armagh	2/33	Bray	1/6
Athlone	1/11	Brookeborough	2/19
Athy	1/9	Broomhedge	3/57
Aughnacloy	2/34		
		Cairnshill	3/50
Ballina	2/23	Carlisle Road, L'Derry	2/24
Ballinacorr	2/35	Carlow	1/7
Ballinamallard	2/22	Carnalea	3/53
Ballineen	1/13	Carnlough	3/44
Ballingrane	1/15	Carrickfergus	3/43
Ballintra	2/27	Castlecaulfield	2/31
Ballyclare	3/42	Castleberg	2/25
Ballymena	3/46	Cavan Town	2/39
Ballymoney	3/40	Cavandoragh	2/25
Ballynafeigh	3/50	Centenary (Leeson Park)	1/1
Ballynahinch	3/57	Church Hill	2/17
Ballynanny	2/34	Church of the Resurrection, Queen's University, Belfast (Jt C of I)	3/49
Ballynure	3/42		
Banbridge	2/38	Clabby	2/20
Bandon	1/13	Clonakilty	1/13
Battlehill	2/29	Clontarf	1/3
Belfast South	3/49	Clooney Hall, L'Derry	2/24
Belvoir	3/50	Cloughjordan	1/10
Bessbrook	2/30	Coleraine	3/40
Birr	1/11	Collooney	2/23
Blacklion	2/16	Comber	3/55
Blackrock [Urban Junction]	1/6	Cookstown	2/32
Blackskull	2/38	Cork	1/12

Corlespratten	2/19	Glenburn	3/51
Craigmore	2/36	Glencairn (Jt C of I)	3/48
Craigyhill	3/44	Glengormley	3/41
Cranagill	2/29	Gorey	1/6
Creagh	2/20	Greencastle	3/41
Cregagh	3/51	Greenisland	3/43
Cullybackey	3/47	Grosvenor Hall	3/49
Derryanville	2/29	Hollywood	3/53
Derrygonnelly	2/17		
Doagh	3/42	Inver	2/27
Donacloney	2/38	Irvinestown	2/21
Donaghadee	3/54	Islandmagee	3/43
Donard	3/57		
Donegal	2/27	Jennymount	3/48
Donegall Road	3/49	Joanmount	3/48
Drimoleague	1/13		
Dromore	3/57	Kenmare	1/12
Drumady	2/19	Kilkenny	1/7
Drumquin	2/25	Killarney	1/12
Drumshanbo	2/23	Killylea	2/33
Dublin Korean Church	1/1	Killymaddy	2/33
Dun Laoghaire	1/6	Kinsale	1/12
Dundonald	3/51	Knock	3/51
Dundrum, Dublin	1/4	Knockbreda	3/50
Dungannon	2/31	Knockninny	2/16
Dunkineely	2/28		
		Laghey	2/31
Edenderry	2/29	Larne	3/44
Enniskillen	2/16	Letterbreen	2/16
Epworth	2/29	Limavady	2/24
		Limerick	1/14
Finaghy	3/52	Lisbellaw	2/18
Fintona	2/26	Lisburn (Seymour Street)	3/57
Fivemiletown	2/20	Lisleen	2/25
Florencecourt	2/16	Lisnaskea	2/19
		Longford	2/23
Glacknadrummond	2/24	Lucan	1/2
Glastry	3/56	Lurgan (High Street)	2/35
Glenavy	2/36	Lurgan (Queen Street)	2/35



Maghaberry (The Church on the Hill) (Jt C of I)	3/57	Rathcoole	3/41
Magherafelt	2/32	Rathgar (Brighton Road)	1/1
Magheragall	3/57	Richhill	2/37
Maguiresbridge	2/18	Roscrea	1/10
Mahon	2/29	Sandymount	1/5
Manorhamilton	2/23	Seymour Hill	3/52
Markethill	2/37	Shankill	3/48
Mayne	2/26	Shinrone	1/10
Millstreet	1/12	Skibbereen	1/13
Moira	2/36	Sligo	2/23
Monaghan	2/34	Springfield	2/17
Monkstown, Church of the Good Shepherd (Jt C of I)	3/41	Strabane	2/24
Mossley	3/41	Sutton	1/3
Mountmellick	1/9	Sydenham	3/51
Mountpottinger	3/51	Tallaght	1/1
Movilla Abbey (Jt C of I)	3/55	Tandragee	2/37
Moville	2/24	Tempo	2/18
Moy	2/31	Togherdoo	2/26
Newbuildings	2/24	Trillick	2/22
Newry	2/30	Trinity, Lisburn	3/57
Newtownards (Regent Street)	3/55	Tullamore	1/11
Newtownards Road	3/51	Tullyroan	2/29
Newtownbutler	2/19	Warrenpoint	2/30
Newtownkelly	2/31	Waterford	1/8
Newtownstewart	2/26	Whiteabbey	3/41
Omagh	2/26	Whitecastle	2/24
Pettigo	2/21	Whitehead	3/43
Portadown (Thomas Street)	2/29	Wicklow	1/6
Portaferry	3/56	Woodvale	3/48
Portlaoise	1/9	Youghal	1/12
Portrush	3/40		
Portstewart	3/40		
Priesthill (Zion)	3/57		
Primacy (Jt C of I)	3/53		

## APPENDIX 4A & 4B

brought by the Council on Social Responsibility  
and received by Conference

### APPENDIX 4A: Facing into Poverty

#### Section One: Introduction and Remit

Conference 2022 passed these two paragraphs as part of a wider Resolution on poverty as it called:

“Conference also commends the partnership arrangement between the Council of Social Responsibility, Christians Against Poverty and the Trussell Trust as it seeks to encourage Methodists on the island of Ireland to Pray, Learn and Act with regard to poverty.

Furthermore, Conference directs the Council of Social Responsibility to gather information and reflect prayerfully on the nature of poverty on the island of Ireland and to report to Conference next year on a series of evidenced-based recommendations to local administrations – north and south – and to the Methodist people with regard to reducing poverty as well as encouraging practical actions to support those most in need.”

The partnership between the Council of Social Responsibility, Christians Against Poverty and the Trussell Trust did seek to encourage Methodists on the island of Ireland to Pray, Learn and Act with regard to poverty by the following actions:

Articles and posts on MCI Facebook and website as well as the Methodist Newsletter:

- Larne Food Bank
- The effect of poverty on the 5 City Missions
- Mental Health and poverty
- Child Poverty
- Debt awareness
- Disability and poverty

The effect of the present cost-of-living crisis as it has impacted on people as well as volunteers and employees of our partner charities and the 5 City Missions is reported on in Section Three below.

Play it by Ear was commissioned to produce 3 impactful monologues as follows:

- The Crisis: Homelessness
- The Crisis: Poverty which deals with the heat / eat dilemma
- The Crisis: Help? which focuses on the help offered by the likes of CAP with budgeting.

A detailed resource bank of relevant material on poverty is available on the MCI website.

Briefing material was provided to the President and Lay Leader in advance of their visit to Lisburn Food Bank and Seymour Street's Damask project.

The partnership also resourced a Connexional Prayer meeting via Zoom.

CSR championed the Warm Space initiative and, with the willing support of the District Superintendents, an interactive data base of congregational and circuit outreach such as

Warm Space, Food Bank, Uniform Bank or Baby Bank by way of illustration has been compiled as reported below in Section 5.

Finally, four podcasts on the theology of poverty and the Christian imperative to do all in the eradication of poverty has been commissioned. Section Four in this report refers to this Christian imperative.

In Section Two, the Council has gathered information and reflected prayerfully on the nature of poverty on the island of Ireland in order to report to Conference on a series of recommendations to local administrations – north and south – and to the Methodist people with regard to reducing poverty as well as encouraging practical action to support those most in need. These can be found in Section Six.

In all of this activity the three pillars of the partnership have been prevalent: to pray, to learn and to act. The two-fold purpose has to be to support with compassionate practical action those individuals and families who are most in need, and the Missions and charities working alongside them, as well as to act with passionate conviction to eliminate poverty in the first instance.

## Section Two: Some basic facts

<p><b>Northern Ireland:</b> Official figures in Northern Ireland rely on an income poverty measure only set at 60 per cent of median household income. (=£18,470 or €355pw) Source: Department for Communities and Department of the Economy</p>	<p><b>Republic of Ireland:</b> Official figures in Ireland rely on both an income poverty measure is set at 60 per cent of median household income (=€15,158 or €291.50pw) and an indicator of material deprivation. Sources: Central Statistics Office and Social Justice Ireland</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around 370,000 people (17%) are living below the poverty line in NI.</li> <li>• Nearly one in every three is a child. Along with their parents/carers, they make up nearly 60% people living below the poverty line. More than two in every three children in poverty live in households where someone is working. The vast majority of the remainder (c. 40,000) are being looked after by the 23,000 lone parents living in poverty.</li> <li>• Working age people without dependent children account for nearly one in every three people living below the poverty line.</li> <li>• Around 43,000 working age people (without dependent children) living in poverty are people with disability.</li> <li>• Almost one in every three pensioners in poverty (just under 10,000 of the 31,000) lives alone. Single pensioners make up about a quarter of all pensioners.</li> <li>• The majority (60%) of people in poverty live outside the wider Belfast metropolitan area. Derry City and Strabane has the highest poverty rate of all council areas at 27%.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around 595,000 people (11.6%) are living below the poverty line in RoI.</li> <li>• About 135,000 children up to the age of 18 or 13.6% are living in poverty.</li> <li>• This rises for a single adult with a child(ren) to 22.8%</li> <li>• For those over 65 years of age 11.9% are in poverty but this rises to 21.5% if a pensioner is living singly.</li> <li>• The highest category, albeit combined, is for those who are either with long term illness or with a disability and stands at 39.1%</li> <li>• Regarding location and proximity to Dublin, 8% for those living in Dublin and the Midlands are recorded as living in poverty (but there will be pockets of much higher poverty levels), whereas the northern and western counties are recorded at 18% in poverty.</li> <li>• 9,825 people are homeless of which 2,811 were children.</li> <li>• 5,143 single adults and 1,238 families are living in emergency accommodation.</li> </ul>

- 15,768 presented to NIHE as homeless of which 6700 were children.
- 3481 families were accepted by the NIHE as being homeless

Some caveats to above table

- Statistics have been extracted separately from sources; there is no comparative information as such and next to no comparative academic research has been undertaken.
- The above does not compare like with like as there are considerable differences to tax, social security payments, what areas are particularly targeted and the time it takes to get payments into bank accounts, housing costs and availability.
- The housing crisis (ROI) is putting enormous pressure on many people. Many have to make severe choices about expenditure due to very high rents. While not necessarily showing up in these statistics, people's wellbeing is also greatly negatively affected by the unavailability of housing.
- Whilst both jurisdictions measure poverty at 60% of median income, indices of material deprivation are measured in the ROI, the nature and extent of which can vary annually.
- Whilst these are up-to-date figures (published 2022) at the time of submission, they are somewhat "skewed" due to the pandemic and they do not take account of the cost-of-living crisis / energy prices and food inflation as a result of the war in Ukraine.

### Section Three: Lived experience of charities and Missions

We had originally considered seeking the views of those with lived experience of poverty but decided that it would be imposing too many demands on the already over-stretched staff and volunteers of the organisations we are partnering with as well as the City Missions. So we sought responses from our partners and Missions as to their experience as a charity over the last couple of years and what they thought would be their expectations and challenges over the next couple of years.

#### ***Christians Against Poverty***

Times have been tough. Covid and then cost of living, really without a break, has been tough for us all. We thought we were seeing cost of living pressures during Covid, with people being at home more etc (and we were) but nothing like what came next without, really, any time for people to recover.

Our amazing frontline worked on through it all to help our clients, in so many practical ways, while times were and are tough for them also. Clients' cases are getting more complex - especially around mental health. One in five of our clients last year (2022 Client report based on 2021 client data) said poor mental health was a major reason for their debt. And debt is a big driver in mental health problems so there is a cycle that needs to be broken.

And then, unsurprisingly given the financial climate, you factor in falling incomes for charities like ours and the churches we partner with, just when we are needed the most, and this creates even more pressure on us all.

More complex cases, as has been happening. Deficit or broken budgets which is already a huge problem (about 50% of cases UK wide are now in the category) will continue to be a massive issue.

These cases are not proceeding and cannot proceed because client's budgets do not add up and they can't move on. There is no money to pay into a repayment plan and no money for court fees so they are "stuck"- placing pressure on themselves, on debt advisors/frontline, as they don't see people progress, and on the sector as a whole, because people in this situation will have to keep coming back to us or others and there isn't sufficient capacity for this.

### ***Trussell Trust***

Food banks in the Trussell Trust network provided 1.3 million emergency food parcels across between April to September this year - a record number for this six-month period. The cost-of-living emergency is impacting all of us. But for people on the lowest incomes, it's simply impossible.

From April to September this year we have given out 32,000 emergency parcels to people in Northern Ireland. 13,400 of these were provided for children. This represents a 25% increase from last year and a 194% increase compared to five years ago. Almost 10,000 people in Northern Ireland were forced to turn to a food bank in the Trussell Trust network for the first time. It's not right that people in our community are needing a charity's help to put food on the table. Everyone in Northern Ireland should be able to afford the essentials.

But the rise in the cost of living is pushing more and more families through the doors of food banks.

According to new research by the Trussell Trust, one in five people referred to a food bank in the Trussell Trust network are in households where someone is working. This comes as food banks in our network are telling us, for the first time, that need for emergency food is outstripping donations as the cost of living emergency leads to a drastic increase in the number of people forced to turn to charity for support.

The current cost-of-living emergency is built on an existing crisis of destitution in our communities. The need for food banks has been steadily rising over the years as food banks and other frontline organisations plug the gaps in an insufficient social security system that is unable to protect people from the most severe forms of hardship. As our statistics show, the level of need for emergency food parcels seen in the mid-year period 2022/23 is more than we distributed in the entirety of the year five years ago.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis have served to erode households' financial resilience even further and have weakened the social security system. The increase in need for emergency food parcels that we have seen across the Trussell Trust network in the last 6 months, demonstrates how the cost of living crisis is forcing more people to the doors of food banks more frequently, because they simply do not have enough money to afford the essentials.

We also sought the response from the City Missions as to the impact the cost of living crisis was having on staff and on their organisation as a business / charity. The responses are generic.

### ***Impact on staff from the 5 City Missions***

Staff are facing increased concerns from Service Users. They encounter people not eating properly, nor tending to their medical needs due to the expense of travel, and not socialising. The concern of Covid has not entirely gone away for many older people.

Staff are aware that a lot of people whom they support do not have family members to help. The fear is for those people who do not have the Missions to support them will have no one to advocate for them.

The worries and concerns of Service Users impacts on staff wellbeing. It is, as has been described, a new strain of “**compassion fatigue**”. One respondent commented “You get into this line of work to do good. To help people. It’s getting harder and harder. The need of people is overwhelming and I am not sure how much more of watching people suffer I can take”. Added to this are the real fears that staff have annually or towards the end of the life-time of a funding stream in regard to their job retention.

Coupled with this, staff have their own personal concerns about affordability of travel and general living costs. Unsurprisingly, the cost of living crisis affects Mission staff just as much as anyone else.

### ***Impact on Missions as businesses / charities***

The 5 Missions vary considerably in location, outreach and resources but the mounting challenges being faced are common to all:

- Staff recruitment and retention: how can the charity sector compete with the supermarkets?
- Staff morale / wellbeing
- Increased waiting lists / demands matched by fears of reduced donations. The fear of reduced donations is considerable. More complex requests and cases are being referred to various services leading to a reduced throughput of Service Users, which in turn leads to people waiting longer for the service. This mirrors the issue of backlog in the health services.
- Energy and other costs
- Looking to expand social enterprise activities to generate additional funding streams, all in a very uncertain economic climate.

## **Section Four: Theological Reflection**

Methodists in Ireland are encouraged to “*live wholeheartedly as followers of Jesus for the transformation of the world.*” What does that mean for the thousands living in poverty in Ireland and across the globe today? If the cost-of-living crisis is an urgent social need, what is the MCI missional response?

Christ did not only come to preach good news to the poor, but he also was a poor man. He was a Jewish man living under Roman rule under a system of exploitation.

When he said in Luke 6 “*Blessed are you who are poor for yours is the kingdom of God*”, two women read those words. One a single mum with a toddler in rented accommodation, her electric meter show 10 units left, no benefits expected for 4 days and little food in the fridge. The other, a single employed mum, who pays her electric bill by direct debit, can afford childcare, and the cupboards are well filled. To one the words will relate to her lived experience hoping for help, to the other it could be dreams of a spiritual home.

Old Testament writers spoke on the social injustices of their day but also demanded that the people of faith took up the cause to defend those in crisis (Isaiah 1v 17 Proverbs 3: 8-9). Carrying that into the New Testament, this section addresses the response of the early church to poverty and poses the question are there lessons to take forward? What are today’s churches missional imperatives from the early church stories?

Here are four early church lessons that brought new perspectives on society and the treatment of the poor.

**1] To be Christlike in adopting an attitude of poverty.** To one Jesus said “go and sell what you have and give it to the poor” to another “How hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God”. Paul speaks of Jesus “Though he was rich yet for our sake he became poor, so that by his poverty we became rich”. In following Jesus, a generous attitude to poverty is a faithful way to go. The imbalance of power that exists between the haves and have nots could be addressed by the church adopting a simpler attitude to the accumulation of wealth by living a life of simplicity and service.

**2] A sharing of resources so that no one need be poor.** Acts 2; 44-45 gives one the earliest descriptions of the church. A community built on sharing their resources for mutual wellbeing is model for the church which has application beyond. When Jesus said “the poor, you will always have”, implies that the church will always be with the poor. The task of getting to know the poor and seeking to share life with all remains a challenge.

**3] Finding Jesus in strange places.** The parable of the Sheep and the Goats {Matt: 25 31-46} tells of faithful people being given opportunity to be Jesus to the naked, the stranger and to miss the opportunity leads to judgement. If you look hard enough you may find Jesus in the lives of the prisoner, the poor and the hungry. If there is no desire for mutual friendship, then there is no commitment to true love because mutual love only exists among equals.

**4] A NEW SOCIAL ORDER.** When in the temple Jesus lifted the scroll and quoted “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, .... Release for the captives.... Sight of the blind... oppressed go free... and proclaim the year of the Lord favour.” (Luke 4: 18) Was Christ calling for a new world order that the church should be in the place of challenging injustice and demand social action? The fact we live in a country reliant on Food Banks shouts of a failed system that the church should be speaking out on.

As Gustavo Gutierrez writes “but the poor person does not exist as an inescapable fact of destiny. His or her existence is not politically neutral, and it is not ethically innocent. The poor are a by-product of the system in which we live and for which we are responsible. They are marginalized by our social and cultural world.... Hence the poverty of the poor is not a call to generous relief action, but a demand that we go and build a different social order.”

There can be no doubt of the rise of concern among Christians to address the issues of poverty with the giving of money, time, skill to help, but care is needed we don't create a “doing to” rather than “a being with” missional attitude.

## **Section Five: What is being done around Methodism?**

Methodist people have always recognised that caring for those who find themselves in difficult circumstances is an important strand of Christian ministry. This is clearly demonstrated through the breadth and depth of work carried out by our five mission churches over many years.

In 2023 all three of our Districts participated in a survey to identify how many circuits were responding to needs they identified in their communities by developing a local ministry or supporting a ministry established by others. Of particular interest for this

paper is the number of these initiatives which were commenced in response to the current economic crisis. Forty circuits across all districts responded to the on-line survey. Twenty-two circuits had commenced at least one new ministry between 2020 and 2023 giving a total of thirty-seven new ministries across the circuits. The most commonly reported ministries were warm welcome space type initiatives (14) and foodbanks (12) community meals (4), baby banks (4) and warm coats/clothing (3). Twenty of these ministries were delivered or supported in partnership with other churches in the community or with external voluntary organisations. It is important to note the commitment to long-established ministries reported from 20 circuits, (NB some of these reported new additional initiatives since 2020) which responded to local need in earlier years but who undoubtedly will have experienced greater demand with the recent cost-of-living crisis.

## Section Six: Call to Action

### Pray

	Type of Action	Level / Action Lead <i>Individual, Congregation, Circuit, CSR, District, Governance Board, Connexion</i>
1.	Pray regularly individually or in a prayer network for all those who are vulnerable, affected by the present cost of living crisis and are affected adversely by poverty and deprivation.	Individual, Congregation, Circuit, District, Connexion
2.	Pray regularly individually or in a prayer network for our partners in NI Christians Against Poverty and the Trussell Trust; other similar agencies and the 5 Methodist City Missions and the Child Care Society that they may affect meaningful change.	Individual, Congregation, Circuit, District, Connexion
3.	Highlight poverty at least once a year in Sunday Worship possibly using worship resources from Church Action Against Poverty perhaps on its designated Sunday or use <a href="https://breadlineresearch.coventry.ac.uk/">https://breadlineresearch.coventry.ac.uk/</a> as a Lenten Bible Study.	Congregation, Circuit, District

### Learn

	Type of Action	Level / Action Lead <i>Individual, Congregation, Circuit, CSR, District, Governance Board, Connexion</i>
4.	Read more about Child Poverty Action Group, Depaul Ireland, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Save the Children (UK), St Vincent de Paul, The Children's Society or Social Justice Ireland and any other relevant charity working to eradicate child, or any other form of, poverty. Listen to podcasts from Social Justice Ireland and the like.	Individual, Council on Social Responsibility



5.	Become more informed by finding out more about the needs in your local area and learn from others involved as CAP Advisors / Trussell Trust food bank volunteers or similar charities e.g. Storehouse and any other relevant charity working to eradicate child, or any other form of, poverty.	Individual, Congregation, Circuit
6.	Have a better understanding of the correlation between business practices, employment prospects and job security and poverty	Individual, Council of Social Responsibility
7.	Have a better understanding of the correlation between housing provision, homelessness and poverty.	Individual, Council of Social Responsibility

## Act

	<b>Type of Action</b>	<b>Level / Action Lead</b> <i>Individual, Congregation, Circuit, CSR, District, Governance Board, Connexion</i>
8.	Before voting at election time, consider prayerfully which party has the most effective anti-poverty policies / strategy.	Individual
9.	Support / volunteer / set up a local Baby Bank, Food Bank, School Uniform Bank, Breakfast Club, Homework Club, Summer Scheme, Warm Spaces.	Individual, Congregation, Circuit
10.	Support / volunteer / donate to the 5 Methodist Missions work with children / families / single adults or donate to the Child Care Society.	Individual, Congregation, Circuit
11.	In the Republic, join with other stakeholders to lobby government for change such as Social Justice Ireland or the Children's Rights Alliance Ireland's No Child 2020 campaign in the Republic which called on the Irish government to ensure that no child should be: • hungry • homeless • be without timely, affordable healthcare • be blocked from having an education • be excluded from society.	Connexion
12.	In the Republic of Ireland, learn more about and monitor the work of the Child Poverty and Wellbeing Unit in the Taoiseach's Office.	Individual, Council of Social Responsibility
13.	In the Republic of Ireland, to increase the rate of the Jobseekers Benefit to the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment rate of E300.	Connexion
14.	In Northern Ireland, join with other stakeholders to lobby government for change removing the two-child limit would mean 11,000 fewer children in poverty and introducing a £20 Child Payment for families eligible for means-tested benefits would lift a further 27,000 children out of poverty: a combined reduction of about 25%. This would cost in the region of £56m per year.	Connexion

15.	In the spirit of the “jubilee”, to lobby government in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to remove debt deductions to allow some breathing space for families.	Connexion
16.	In Northern Ireland, join with other stakeholders to lobby government for a one-off payment of £500 to those entitled to Disability Allowances or Carers Benefit. This would cost in the region of £194m.	Connexion
17.	In Northern Ireland, join with other stakeholders to lobby government to re-instate the £20 per week uplift. According to the Department for Communities, the £20 uplift, which translated to £86.67 per month, was withdrawn from 134,000 people in Northern Ireland from October 6, 2021. Over 44,000 households with children have a Universal Credit claim in payment meaning that around 83,930 children were impacted by its removal. This would cost in the region of £143m.	Connexion
18.	In Northern Ireland, for those who receive the Winter Fuel Allowance and in the Republic of Ireland, those who receive the Fuel Allowance but don't actually need it – donate it to an appropriate charity or Methodist Mission / Child Care Society.	Individual
19.	In Northern Ireland, join with other stakeholders to lobby government, especially HM Treasury, to ensure that the promise to maintain the European Social Fund is activated with immediate effect.	Connexion
22.	Bring a paper to Conference 2024 on the arguments, consequences and potential implications for MCI, and its attendant agencies, of adopting the Real Living Wage in NI and its equivalent in the Republic of Ireland.	Governance Board
21.	Bring a paper to Conference 2024 on how the Governance Board might disperse at least 10% of MCI reserves to a criteria-based fund to which congregations, Circuits and the 5 City Missions could apply for seed money and/or match funding in order to initiate or continue a poverty-focussed project.	Governance Board
22.	Continue to bring poverty issues to the attention of MCI and to provide an update within three years on how these recommendations have been put into practice.	Council of Social Responsibility

## APPENDIX 4B: CSR Statement on Racism and Homelessness

The Methodist Church in Ireland is deeply concerned about the current escalation of attempts to increase racial tension in Ireland. We have spoken about this concern in statements over recent years, but this present context is especially concerning.

We recognise our responsibility within our wider world. Earthed within our own historical consciousness is a recognition that people often have to flee dire circumstances and hope to receive a welcome elsewhere. As a country we have sought to respond to our international responsibilities in this regard. Probably due to our geography, we have not received as many refugees as other countries have. However, we must act upon our responsibility to be a place of refuge for those needing it and to listen compassionately and wisely to those seeking asylum.

We remember this sad first anniversary of the present invasion by Russia of Ukraine. We note that tens, maybe hundreds, of thousands have died as a result of this cruel war. Living conditions for many Ukrainians have been dire amid heart-breaking loss, upheaval, the threat of bombs and limited power and infrastructure this winter. It has been very right that Ireland has welcomed tens of thousands of Ukrainian people seeking refuge. This is alongside our welcome to those from other countries, such as Syria and Afghanistan, who have sought refuge here.

While always seeking to engage positively with government, and appreciating progress made, over the years we have been critical of the slow response by successive governments to the housing crisis in Ireland. It has both been a symptom of, but also resulted in, deepening divisions within society between rich and poor, and between those with a loud voice and the disenfranchised and those with power and those who feel at the mercy of others. There have been many factors at play in this ongoing social injustice. However, it is our view that there has simply been a lack of urgency to deal with it as a crisis. Practically, for many ordinary people, it is worse than a crisis. It has disastrous outcomes for people as they are consumed with worry about how to simply manage their normal lives given crippling rents when facing other life responsibilities and challenges.

The housing crisis both causes further division in society and intensifies the pressure on accommodation in terms of us helping others. Our frustration should lead towards a fairer society where all can live well, given the wealth of our country as a whole. It should lead us to action where it is within our opportunity. It should most definitely not be turned on those who are vulnerable or marginalised.

Political rhetoric and division can stagnate progress. We call on all politicians to use language that reflects the value and dignity of every person rather than being a reaction to the current debate. All the political parties come with experience of various input to government and opposition. We call on all political parties in Dáil Éireann to work together for the common good. We ask that all party leaders meet together to address these crucial challenges facing our country. Our country is not well-served by constant

blame, excuses, calls for other parties to not exist or selfish vested interests. We are writing to each of the political party leaders with this request. We are also writing to the appropriate ministers to ask that information be disseminated by public representatives about Ireland's legal responsibilities, and other information, including information on those who fall under International Protection.

Communities across Ireland have received Asylum Seekers over many years. In many settings there has been good communication between government departments and local representatives and communities. In many others the communication has been very poor, something which can lead to ignorance or misunderstanding. In any demographic change there will always be genuine concern about the welfare, safety, cohesion, available services and opportunities of all involved. These concerns must always be aired in safe settings, acknowledged and addressed where possible. The evidence in this country over past years and decades has been that when this happens, local communities not only live in peace but also thrive.

False information or a lack of truth is also a real concern when it comes to social media. There is a sinister deception associated with much of what has been and may be said during these times. There are many currently using various platforms to peddle disinformation around Ireland. They are using well-honed methods from around the world to intensify concerns, twist truth and create crises. This often happens through various pages named with individual towns or areas expressing 'concern.'

Racism is nothing new in our country. It has existed in various forms and settings over the decades. And we are all prone to allowing our preferences to become prejudices. However, this is a moment when we need to recognise that racism has a particularly dangerous opportunity to take hold. We need to speak out and act against it.

**As Methodists, and primarily as followers of Jesus, we are concerned to ask ourselves, 'What is our responsibility at this time?'**

Our primary view of the dignity of all in society is more than equality, it is a recognition that all are children of God and reflect the image of God. Our interpersonal actions are orientated by a deep appreciation that each person is a beautiful creation of and loved by God.

- We commit to examining our own hearts. We come with our own preferences and limited knowledge and so we consider the potential dangers of ourselves being wrong or prejudiced.
- We both pray for and engage with our government and the various groups that are concerned for the welfare of the marginalised in society.
- We will use our speech compassionately and courageously. Where there are neighbourhood or workplace conversations about these topics, we will speak up with compassion, positivity and truth.
- We will be obstacles in the spread of fear, ignorance or misinformation.
- We will come alongside those who are hurting and the marginalised. We recognise that people from ethnic minority backgrounds throughout Ireland today suffer a wide

range of racial attacks. These can be overt or subtle, but they are life-denying. We combat this by our words and actions in terms of how we can be life-giving to all.

- We will enhance cohesion in our communities. We are to be sources of healing, reconciliation, hope and joy in our society.
- We use our resources, even those most precious to us, to the benefit of others. Last year we committed to 'open up our homes' for those from Ukraine seeking refuge. We do so again.
- Go to <https://registerofpledges.redcross.ie/#/>
- We will march or protest. There are various protests against racism taking place all around the country. (Search on Facebook to see what's in your area. Be ready to respond quickly as groups promoting hate or division can gather a protest quickly and so anything to counter that needs a quick response.)

## APPENDIX 5:

### Changes to the Manual of Laws brought by the Governance Board and received by the Conference

#### Appendix 5A

Consequent to changes in areas once covered by the Church Development Board and having received a Notice of Motion in 2023, the Conference amends the Manual of Laws as indicated

Ordinary Expenditure 15.09

District Superintendents shall inquire into the needs of those circuits applying for grants from the Department and shall recommend to the Department the amount considered needful in each case for the ensuing year. Such applications shall be examined by the ~~Church Development Board~~ Connexional Team and the applications and the recommendations or decisions of the ~~Church Development Board~~ Connexional Team shall be reported to the General Committee and included in the Minutes of the Committee.

15.15 Grants within the limit set by the Governance Board may be approved by the Treasurers of the Home Mission Department in consultation with the ~~Officers of the Church Development Board.~~ Connexional Team.

15.37 Application for Mission Ireland grants shall be processed by the District Superintendents who shall carefully examine such applications for assistance and shall recommend to the Department the amount considered needful in each case for the ensuing Connexional year. Such applications shall be examined by the ~~Church Development Board~~ Connexional Team and the recommendations or decisions of the ~~Church Development Board~~ Connexional Team shall be reported to the Governance Board and included in the Minutes of the Meeting. Projects employing lay workers shall only be considered if operating under legislation of the Employment Advisory Group.

Delete Chapter 16

~~27.03 The Property Board Development Account is provided and maintained to encourage and assist in the purchase, erection or rental of buildings in areas where facilities for worship and witness do not exist, or are deemed to be inadequate, due to growth.~~

~~(a) Applications for Church Development status shall be dealt with by the Church Council, the Circuit Executive and the Church Development Board.~~

~~(b) When the Church Development Board gives approval for Church Development status, the General Secretary of the Home Mission Department shall so inform the Secretary of the Property Board and the Superintendent of the Circuit through whom applications for grants and loans shall be submitted.~~

27.03 The Property Board Mission Development Account (formally the Property Board Development Account) is provided and maintained to encourage and assist in the purchase, erection or rental of buildings in areas where facilities for worship and witness do not exist, demand development due to missional potential or are deemed to be inadequate, due to growth. Applications to the Fund are assessed by the Connexional Team. Any application in excess of a level determined annually by the Governance Board shall be brought to the Governance Board prior to approval being granted. Applications should be made to the Connexional Team through the District Superintendent.

37.01 The Governance Board shall appoint a Prison and Healthcare Chaplaincy Committee, which shall report through the ~~Church Development Board~~ Connexional Team.

## Appendix 5B

### **With reference to Statutory Trustees, Conference notes the changes to Appendix 4 of the Manual of Laws as indicated**

#### 4. Trustee's Length of Service

At each Annual General Meeting, the Administration Committee ~~Governance Committee~~ shall submit the names of those Trustees who will have completed ten years of service by the ensuing Conference. These names will then be submitted to Conference for removal by reason of retirement. When a Trustee so scheduled for retirement is involved in ongoing work, the Governance Committee may recommend that the Trustee's retirement be delayed for up to three years provided that during the twelve months previous to the date of her/his retirement he/she shall have attended at least one meeting of the Trustees.

#### Administration Committee ~~Governance Committee~~

The Administration Committee ~~Governance Committee~~ shall be appointed by the Annual General Meeting. It shall meet at least once a year and report to the Annual General Meeting.

Its responsibilities are

- The nomination of new Trustees, professional advisors, auditors, investment managers, legal advisors, and bankers
- The nomination of Trustees to outside bodies as needed
- The monitoring of the current governance structures for the Trustees
- The training for Trustees.

# APPENDIX 6:

## Past Cases Review – Final Report June 2023

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- 1 Introduction
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### Dedication

**This report is dedicated to all survivors or victims of abuse that has occurred within the life of the Methodist Church in Ireland with the hope, prayer and intention that this work, findings and our response will contribute to making the Church a safer place for all.**

### 1.0 Introduction

As a Christian Church, the Methodist people in Ireland are called to be a community of love, care, support and safety. We are to be the friends of all and the enemies of none. We recognise that while this has always been our intention, it has not been the experience and reality for all. We must be better. Consequently, the Methodist Church in Ireland chose to investigate its past actions. This was not caused by any specific issue or awareness of problems. Rather it was in response to the widespread awareness that various institutions, organisations, Christian denominations and others had failed to keep all as safe as possible in days gone by. This is a situation of great distress. Society has failed to adequately support those who are vulnerable. The Methodist Church chose to recognise this and to relook at its past experiences, actions and failings. Our intention has been to learn from the past in order to make the present and future as safe as possible for all who are in any way in the life of our Church.

This review was agreed by the Methodist Conference in 2020. The remit was to:

- a) identify and consider sample past cases since 1950 that have safeguarding concerns, review the response at the time, implement any remedial action and consider any lessons to be learnt to develop stronger practices, processes and culture;
- b) seek to establish whether there are any currently unreported cases, and where any are highlighted to investigate, implement any necessary action and consider any lessons to be learnt to develop stronger practices, processes and culture.



The only significant change made was to decide to review 100% of cases rather than a sample of cases. This was to ensure as full an understanding as possible, and in response to the recognition that there were fewer past cases than had been anticipated. It is our hope that any publicity around this report may encourage and enable one or more people to come forward and report to us their experience where this has not already happened. It is our intention that this report does not signal the end of something, but rather clearly articulates our desire to continue to learn from our past, no matter how painful this may be for us as a Church. Whatever pain we feel is merely a fraction of that experienced by those for whom their experience of our Church has been of abuse, neglect, cruelty, violence and harm. Even to write this is distressing, knowing the harm caused to others.

This report is presented with the full awareness that it speaks of our failures as a Church and our failures as individual followers of Jesus. We have failed to keep all in the life of our Church as safe as possible, and we have failed in our calling to be disciples of Jesus Christ. We are sorry and resolve to do whatever it takes to make the Church a place of complete safety for all from today onwards. We also note that we uncovered a number of examples where the Church was considered a safe place for a young person or adult to reveal abuse that had occurred to them unconnected to the Church. Such cases were also part of our investigation. We may have been found to be a safe space and acted well, but there is still much for us to learn so that this becomes the experience of everyone.

### **1:1 We Apologise**

We apologise. The Methodist Church in Ireland apologises without reserve to all those who have been victims of abuse in the life of our Church. We have failed you, failed society and failed our Saviour. Our processes that were designed to protect all have not done that. We have caused pain that goes beyond measure. We apologise that we have not been the beacon of light that we are called to be. It has taken us too long to recognise our failings and face up to the truth. We have failed to listen carefully to what we were being told in the past. We apologise.

### **1:2 Our Way Ahead**

Now that we know what we know, there is no longer any possible defence for failure in the present or future. We do not offer a defence for the past but we resolve that the present and future will be different because of what we have learnt. We accept again, as a Church and as individuals, the Covenant prayer we renew each year. We renew this in light of our failings and sin, and seek in God's strength to be different.

'Sisters and brothers in Christ, let us again accept our place within this covenant which God has made with us and with all who are called to be Christ's disciples. This means that, by the help of the Holy Spirit, we accept God's purpose for us, and the call to love and serve God in all our life and work.

Christ has many services to be done: some are easy, others are difficult; some bring honour, others bring reproach; some are suitable to our natural inclinations and material interests, others are contrary to both; in some we may please Christ and please ourselves; in others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves. Yet the power to do all these things is given to us in Christ, who strengthens us.

Therefore let us make this covenant of God our own. Let us give ourselves to him, trusting in his promises and relying on his grace.

Eternal God, in your faithful and enduring love you call us to share in your gracious covenant in Jesus Christ. In obedience we hear and accept your commands; in love we seek to do your perfect will; with joy we offer ourselves anew to you. We are no longer our own but yours. I am no longer my own but yours. Your will, not mine, be done in all things, wherever you may place me, in all that I do and in all that I may endure; when there is work for me and when there is none; when I am troubled and when I am at peace.

Your will be done when I am valued and when I am disregarded; when I find fulfilment and when it is lacking; when I have all things, and when I have nothing. I willingly offer all I have and am to serve you, as and where you choose. Glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. May it be so for ever. Let this covenant now made on earth be fulfilled in heaven. Amen.'

## **2.0 The Methodist Church in Ireland ([www.irishmethodist.org](http://www.irishmethodist.org))**

The Methodist Church is a worldwide communion of over 70 million people which originated from the time of the Wesley brothers, John and Charles, in the mid-eighteenth century. John and his hymn writer brother Charles were members of a group of young men who met daily to pray and study the Bible whilst at Oxford University. Nicknamed 'the Holy Club', they were so methodical in their lifestyle that they were called Methodists, a name which eventually became that of the religious movement and denomination which followed.

### **2.1 Early History**

John Wesley made the first of his twenty-one visits to Ireland in 1747, finding 280 Methodists who had been gathered together in Dublin by pioneer lay preachers. The first chapel was opened at Dublin in 1752 and the first conference was held at Limerick in the same year. Emigrants from Ireland during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were of immense importance in spreading Methodism to other parts of the world. They included Barbara Heck, Philip Embury, Robert Strawbridge, and Robert Williams, pioneers in the United States of America, and Laurence Coughlan, the founder of Methodism in Newfoundland.

### **2.2 Basis of Belief**

The Constitution of the Methodist Church in Ireland sets out the basis of belief as follows:

'The Methodist Church claims and cherishes its place in the Holy Catholic Church, which is the Body of Christ. It rejoices in the inheritance of the Apostolic faith, and loyally accepts the fundamental principles of the historic creeds and of the Protestant Reformation. It ever remembers that, in the Providence of God, Methodism was raised up to spread scriptural holiness through the land by the proclamation of the evangelical faith, and declares its unfaltering resolve to be true to its divinely appointed mission.'

'The doctrines of the evangelical faith, which Methodism has held from the beginning, and still holds, are based upon the divine revelation recorded in the Holy Scriptures. The Methodist Church acknowledges this revelation as the supreme rule of faith and practice. These evangelical doctrines to which the preachers of the

Methodist Church, ministerial and lay, are pledged are contained in Wesley's Notes on the New Testament and the first four volumes of his sermons.'

'The Notes on the New Testament and the forty-four Sermons are not intended to impose a system of formal or speculative theology on Methodist preachers, but to set up standards of preaching and belief which should secure loyalty to the fundamental truths of the Gospel of Redemption and ensure the continued witness of the Church to the realities of the Christian experience of salvation.'

A more detailed understanding of Irish Methodist belief is found at on the Connexional website, see: [MethodistBeliefs\\_web.pdf](#) ([squarespace.com](#))

### **2.3 The Ethos of Methodism**

The Methodist Church seeks to be a Christian community which is open and welcoming to all. At its heart is the conviction that everyone can know and experience the love of God for herself or himself. God's love changes us to be more Christ-like. It is also to be shared with the whole community, in particular with the most vulnerable. Thus, City Missions are an important part of Methodism. Methodists stress that God's love affects the whole person, body and mind as well as spirit. Consequently education and wholeness are high values for the church.

### **2.4 Membership**

The Methodist Church in Ireland has about 200 churches or 'societies' with a total community membership of around 50,000. There are more Methodist Churches and people in Northern Ireland than in the Republic of Ireland, but in each jurisdiction the Methodist people seek to play a full part in national and community life.

### **2.5 Governance and Organisation**

The Methodist Church in Ireland extends throughout the island, and refers to itself as 'the Connexion', to remind individual members and local churches of their interconnected and interdependent nature. Methodism's structures are shaped by its origins. A local congregation, also known as a society, is administered by a Church Council. A large society or a group of societies form a circuit, which may have one or more ministers, is in the care of a Superintendent minister and administered by a Circuit Executive. A group of circuits forms a District, overseen by a District Superintendent and currently there are three Districts: North Eastern, North Western and Southern.

The supreme court of the church is the Conference, which is the final authority in the Church in all matters of doctrine, worship, discipline and order. Each year the Church elects a President, who serves for that year. The Church also elects a Lay Leader, who has a two year term of office. The Secretary of Conference acts as General Secretary of the Church. Lay and ordained people, both men and women are involved in decision making at all levels. The Methodist Church in Ireland has ordained women since 1978, and women may serve in all positions in the Church. A system of committees deals with a variety of issues within the Church.

Methodism has made an important contribution to Irish education, including the establishment of Wesley College in Dublin, Methodist College in Belfast, and Gurteen College in Co Tipperary-this last a college of agriculture. It has developed a wide-ranging social work service, largely through its five city missions in Dublin, Belfast, Newtownabbey and Londonderry,

which control several homes for the elderly, hostel accommodation for needy men and woman, and day care centres for the elderly. An increasing number of churches in other towns provide a range of services on their premises, including luncheon clubs, community advice centres, pre-school play groups, practical help and work with the elderly.

### **3.0 Safeguarding in the Methodist Church in Ireland**

The Methodist Church in Ireland (MCI) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all who are part of the life of our Church in any way. We are particularly conscious of our responsibilities towards children and adults at risk of harm.

#### **3.1 Recent past**

MCI received its first Child Protection report, 'Keep them safe' in 1995, which was also the year that training commenced. The Child Care Act (RoI) 1991 and the Children Order (NI) 1995 were the legislative frameworks which underpinned this.

Since 2004, MCI's Child Protection Policy has been called 'Taking Care', written in conjunction with our colleagues from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. This has been updated twice now to ensure that the Church has the most current policies and procedures in place. Through 'Taking Care', MCI obligated all churches to appoint a Designated Person to work closely with the minister and be responsible for overseeing Child Protection at society and circuit level.

In 2005 it became a requirement in MCI that all leaders (paid and voluntary) should attend MCI safeguarding training at least once every three years. In 2006, MCI made vetting checks compulsory across Ireland within MCI. This reflected legislative changes in Northern Ireland (Protection of Children (NI) Order, 2005) and Republic of Ireland (Criminal Justice Act 2006). In 2016, it became a requirement that all leaders should attend training regardless of other/ external training. In 2020, MCI introduced compulsory re-vetting for all leaders (lay and clergy) through MCI every three years.

#### **3.2 Today**

In 2019 the church moved from having a part-time to a full-time Connexional Safeguarding Officer who is responsible for the provision of a comprehensive Child Protection training programme for leaders, volunteers and ministers across the island of Ireland. The MCI processes vetting forms through the National Vetting Bureau and AccessNI. Vetting checks must be completed through MCI at least once every three years for all working with under 18s, whether paid or voluntary. All who work with children, young people or adults at risk of harm under the auspices of MCI must attend training provided by MCI at least once every three years.

2020	394 completed training
2021	617 completed training
2022	751 completed training

This work is overseen by the Connexional Safeguarding Board which meets at least 4 times per year, and which reports annually to the Governance Board of the Methodist Conference.

As a recognition of the importance of Safeguarding and an example of increasing commitment, the MCI has increased its expenditure as follows:

2016	£11,496
2021	£43,041
2022	£53,513
2023	£60,000 budgeted

Full details of MCI Safeguarding, including current policies, are found at Safeguarding – The Methodist Church in Ireland ([irishmethodist.org](http://irishmethodist.org)).

#### **4.0 Background to this Report**

The Past Cases Review (PCR) process of the Methodist Church in Ireland was established by Conference 2020. An Interim Report was presented to the Governance Board in March 2022 with this Final Report presented to Conference 2023 as agreed in the original timeline. The purpose of this review has been to ascertain if there are any Safeguarding issues that have previously occurred within the life of the Methodist Church in Ireland which, were they subject to today's standards, would be considered unacceptable, inappropriate, unethical or in some cases illegal. The two specific tasks have been to:

- A) identify and consider sample past cases since 1950 that have safeguarding concerns, review the response at the time, implement any remedial action and consider any lessons to be learnt to develop stronger practices, processes and culture;
- B) seek to establish whether there are any currently unreported cases, and where any are highlighted to investigate, implement any necessary action and consider any lessons to be learnt to develop stronger practices, processes and culture.

#### **4.1 Membership**

Chair: Dr Deborah Webster

Vice Chair: Rev Dr Stephen Skuce

Members: Ms Cathy Bell, Rev Ruth Craig, Ms Gillian Kingston, Rev Paul Maxwell, Ms Kathryn Minnis, Ms Sinead Whiting

All the PCR team are members of the MCI with the exception of Dr Deborah Webster who is a member of the Presbyterian Church. Dr Webster's appointment was in light of her expertise in the area and to give a further level of external objectivity to the process and help assure all that this review has been rigorous throughout.

The process has been supported by many colleagues within the MCI including the Secretary of Conference, the Safeguarding Officer and administrative team members.

#### **4.2 Contact**

The main way used to contact the PCR was by [pastcasesreview@irishmethodist.org](mailto:pastcasesreview@irishmethodist.org) and details of the process have been publicly accessible at Safeguarding – The Methodist Church in Ireland ([irishmethodist.org](http://irishmethodist.org)). We continue to invite anyone with safeguarding concerns to contact the Methodist Church via [safeguarding@irishmethodist.org](mailto:safeguarding@irishmethodist.org). The MCI's safeguarding policies and further details are found at Safeguarding – The Methodist Church in Ireland ([irishmethodist.org](http://irishmethodist.org)).

#### **4.3 Scope**

The life and work of the MCI has been considered. This included but was not limited to our ministers, lay employees and local church members; the various departments and teams of the Church and the range of activities including our work with children and young people, residential events, overseas trips and ministers in training at Edgehill College. It includes some semi-independent events eg Castlewellan Holiday Week and its predecessors, and On Fire for France. Such activities may not formally be or have been under the control of MCI but are MCI through and through and so it is appropriate that they have been considered.

This Review has not considered the work of our three existing Methodist schools, nor the work of Gurteen College. While these are clearly Methodist, they have a level of independence that means ongoing review is better carried out through their governing bodies. Each was contacted and in responses they each assured the process of their good wishes and interest in learning anything that might emerge from the review. We have not considered the work of our mission partners when in training in Britain or in their overseas appointments. During such periods of time, up to and including the present, our mission partners serve under the structures of the MCB and come under their support and accountability.

We have considered issues from 1950 onwards. That said, any disclosure prior to 1950 would be considered actively and if already known to some extent by the Church it would be included in the review. If it was a very historic but new disclosure it would be dealt with like any other new disclosure and referred to the MCI Safeguarding Officer who would consult with the relevant authorities irrespective of the age of a potential perpetrator or indeed whether they were already deceased. Consequently events prior to 1950 are not excluded from the scope of this review, but 1950 is taken as a realistic starting point. For the purposes of the review, a 'safeguarding concern' is defined as any concern that a child or adult may have been at risk, been suffering or had suffered abuse, or that someone represented a risk of abuse to others.

#### **4.4 Timeline**

Nov 2020: process begins and all ministers asked for a response

Jan 2021: all current lay employees asked for a response

Feb 2021: all circuits asked for a response, and process publicly launched

Feb 2021: past cases selected through anonymous process for consideration

June 2022: interim report to Conference

June 2023: final report to Conference and findings publicly available

#### **5.0 Number of Cases**

The initial number of recorded cases under consideration within the period being considered was 61. The overwhelming majority of recorded cases date from 1998 onwards. When this was clarified the review quickly decided to consider 100% of cases rather than a sample. However the relatively poor recording means that 61 is an inflated number. Within that number there is one duplication, there are two unsigned 'Agreement between Offender and Church/Circuit' forms reducing the number to 58 but in one record there are two distinct cases bringing the number back to 59. Twenty nine recorded cases are not cases at all but rather records of advice given, or updates 'Agreement between Offender and Church/Circuit' covenants. In all cases a record was needed, but they were not cases in themselves. In particular this highlighted the lack of a systematic approach to recording and then monitoring 'Agreement between Offender and Church/Circuit' processes.

#### **5.1 Final Number**

The accurate number of past cases is 30. While this is a relatively small number and not on the scale recorded in a number of other denominations or institutions even allowing for the size of Methodism, there is no comfort taken in this small number of cases. Like all other denominations we assume that there are unrecorded cases, and part of the purpose of this review is to seek to uncover anything that is currently unknown. A number of

these cases resulted in no action being taken due to no inappropriate actions having occurred. But even with this small number of cases, there is still more than enough issues to consider. We sadly have plenty of cases to learn from.

This demonstrates a recurring issue of relatively poor administrative structures that need to be addressed. In recent years cases have been held by the Secretary of Conference, Director of Ministry and Safeguarding Officer, due to their various responsibilities. Some issues that were brought to the President's Advisory Committee are relevant to the PCR process. All the cases held by the Safeguarding Officer have been considered. The Secretary of Conference and former Director of Ministry have considered the potentially relevant cases they hold and drawn a number to the attention of the PCR. The Chair and Vice Chair have had access to 100% of these cases and have randomly sampled cases not drawn to their attention to ensure their confidence that the appropriate cases have been highlighted. An example of a case that is held by the Secretary of Conference but not relevant to this review is where the marriage of a minister has broken down and there are no safeguarding issues involved.

## **5.2 Type of Case**

Within the 30 recorded cases there are a range type which includes the following:

- 1 inappropriate physical violence that did not result in any police action
- 2 peer to peer physical, sexual or emotional abuse that did not result in any police action
- 3 inappropriate relationships between young adult leaders and teenage participants
- 4 inappropriate use of social media
- 5 no issue to address, after investigation
- 6 abuse that resulted in police action

The cases normally involved an accusation against a lay volunteer leader. There were 6 cases that involved ordained ministers and 3 that involved lay employees.

A number of recorded cases were when a young person or adult in the life of the Church made their first disclosure of abuse that happened to them but unconnected to the Church or to a leader. These are recorded as cases but are examples of where the Church was considered to be a safe place to disclose this abuse and where the Church was able to assist in supporting the young person or adult and engaging with the appropriate statutory authorities.

## **6.0 Work Undertaken**

The PCR process began in July 2020 and in Oct 2020 the Chair, Dr Deborah Webster, was confirmed. The Chair and Vice Chair have met approximately every two months. Considerable work was necessary to confirm the range of potential cases held. The case files were standardised, assigned a case number, held online in a secure site and individual cases made accessible to specific members of the PCR when allocated.

## **6.1 Methodology**

All Methodist ministers were contacted in November 2020 to request a response to the process and there has been a 100% response by stationed ministers and a significant response by retired colleagues. All current and many previous lay employees were contacted in January 2021 to request a response to the process and there has been a good uptake. An actual response rate cannot be determined given the range of lay

employees contacted, the very part-time nature of many of the roles and that contact details are not necessarily available for other than current employees. All circuits were contacted in February 2021 to request a response to the process and there has been an adequate uptake.

The requests for responses to ministers and lay workers, circuits and anyone was to help achieve our 2nd requirement which was to discover any unreported cases. It is hoped that the submission of this final report will be a further point when some may feel now is the right time to disclose something previously not disclosed. Any publicity around the report may further assist individuals to contact the MCI with new information, and again this is welcomed. That should be done via [safeguarding@irishmethodist.org](mailto:safeguarding@irishmethodist.org) or to the President, Secretary of Conference or a District Superintendent. All contact details are readily available on the connexional website [www.irishmethodist.org](http://www.irishmethodist.org). The Methodist Church will always want to hear from anyone with concerns to raise, assures all that we are a safe space for such disclosures, that we will follow our published guidelines and processes and will never seek to silence any voice contacting us. We need to hear. The PCR invited submissions from anyone who considers that they had something relevant to share. Where information has been received about a circumstance that was to that point unknown to the Church, this has been treated as a new disclosure and immediately passed to the Safeguarding Officer to follow up and is not considered to be a part of the PCR.

Wider publicity on the review was created by a public launch on 1 February 2021 with information circulated and material available online. Ecumenical partners have been advised of this MCI process and advice has been received from the Methodist Church in Britain who conducted their own past cases review process with a final report published in May 2015.

Later than originally anticipated, past cases began to be reviewed by the group in October 2021. The process for doing this has been that the Chair randomly chose case numbers and then initially also randomly assigned which team members would consider which case. Each case was accessed through a secure site online by the two or in some cases three team members reading that particular case. It was read separately and then the sub team met online to agree their findings using a proforma which was then passed to the Vice Chair.

The proforma itself was confirmed by the Chair and Vice Chair who considered several draft proformas and used it in a pilot case to finally confirm the document to use. The Chair, and Vice Chair, have had access to 100% of material while the team members have had access to those cases assigned to them.

In November 2021 the Secretary of Conference drew one case to the attention of the PCR requesting it be considered and this has been done. This was because the ongoing work of the review process has raised awareness regarding safeguarding issues and the Secretary of Conference was aware that in at least one specific historic case the MCI may not have acted as comprehensively as it would do so today. This case is reflected upon in this final report.

The Vice Chair reported regularly to the MCI Safeguarding Board, to the General Committee and since July 2021 its successor the Governance Board.



The PCR process has been noted by the Independent Chair of the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Mother and Baby Homes, Magdalene Laundries and Historical Clerical Child Abuse. In November 2020 Judith Gillespie met with the Secretary of Conference and the Vice Chair of the PCR to discuss some general questions, consider the ongoing work of the PCR process and concluded that no further questions needed to be asked of the MCI at that time. As part of this the PCR process invited the Inter-Departmental Working Group to consider appointing someone to our PCR group. This offer was made to further demonstrate and ensure full objectivity and rigour in this MCI process. The Inter- Departmental Working Group thanked us for the invitation but were content that we continue as we are.

## 7.0 Reports

The PCR has read various relevant reports from recent years and those that have been published during the ongoing work of our PCR. The British Methodist Church 2015 report *Courage, Cost and Hope* is particularly relevant, and a number of Irish focused reports are also of significant importance to us.

In 2020 and 2021 reports covering both jurisdictions in Ireland considered the historic Mother and Baby homes. As Methodists we note the following:

- 1 the MCI never had Mother and Baby Homes or anything equivalent to Mother and Baby Homes
- 2 we were happy to be associated with such homes at the time such as individual Methodists serving on the Bethany Home Dublin committee and in an official way through our annually appointed President being vice president of Hopedene, Belfast
- 3 there were Methodists as mothers with babies in one or more homes
- 4 there were very likely Methodists employed in such homes
- 5 our ministers pastorally visited such homes
- 6 our ministers almost certainly were involved in arranging admittance to such homes
- 7 our ministers may have been involved in arranging adoptions
- 8 we do not appear to have been critical of such institutions in their day
- 9 we do not have much evidence to think that our MCI orphanages were much more than very well meaning institutions that reflected all the attitudes and approaches of their day.

While Methodism has not been criticised in any way in these reports, we do not consider that we are without blame. We were part of the culture in that era that enabled the violence, abuse and mistreatment in such homes to happen. A biblical analogy may well be found in the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). At the time the MCI may well have considered that we were part of helping the needs of the vulnerable, and indeed we did that to a high level. We were the Samaritan assisting the person who had been attacked. However, like the Priest and the Levite we also passed by on the other side of the road to where abuse and harm was happening, either not noticing, or choosing not to notice. Like almost all others, we have no record of taking actions at the time to challenge the abuse in such institutions, or to challenge the wider culture that allowed such actions to continue. Like the rest of society at the time, we were part of the problem.

## 8.0 Past Cases Review Findings

Through the systematic investigation into the past cases related to safeguarding held by the Methodist Church in Ireland, a number of issues and themes emerged. These point to practices and procedures which may have been normal in a particular era but are considered below the level required today. These are detailed below and are followed with a number of recommendations. What also became clear is that such a past cases review may be a one off process, but the need to constantly review policies and processes will remain. The Methodist Church needs to be constantly self-critical, to very quickly change as we continue to learn, and to maintain safeguarding as a highest priority.

### 8.1 Findings

- 1 The historic record keeping of the Methodist Church in Ireland has been weak with missing documentation and imprecise records. In case files there is reference to letters or emails received but in a number of cases these have not been retained. In a small number of cases links to other Irish Methodist records that may have some bearing on a case or its outcome have not been made. This is to such an extent that in certain situations we do not have clear evidence that the correct processes were followed. It became clear during this review that current practices have also been weak. These have been addressed but point to the need for the Church to be constantly self-critical.
- 2 In our records, there are examples where it is not clear when an actual allegation has been made, who has made it, how is it addressed and resolved and what is the precise outcome.
- 3 Historically we have not considered the needs of victims and survivors as well as we should have.
- 4 Historically we have treated one or more ministers who have confessed to wrongdoing with a degree of financial generosity.
- 5 Historic activities that were associated with the MCI and have now ceased have not retained records. In such cases no incidents have been recorded or emerged in this process, but the absence of records makes it hard to be certain that good practice at the time was consistently followed. That said, data protection legislation requires the deletion of files that are of no current relevance and there is no question of wrongdoing being raised. But, the absence of any centrally held records is still an issue, albeit a minor one.
- 6 MCI has had several office holders responsible for safeguarding related cases. Currently the Safeguarding Officer, Secretary of Conference and up to June 2021 the Director of Ministry, have all been responsible for cases. Historically it is not clear who was aware of a situation.
- 7 Historically there were too many committees looking at related areas. This may be largely resolved with the reduction in the number of Connexional committees and the appointment of District Superintendents, who are full time regional leaders and involved across the full life of the MCI.
- 8 There have been occasions when an individual has met with representatives of MCI who are seeking to understand and resolve a situation. At times such a meeting has been held with MCI ministers when it would be helpful to have an MCI lay person as well as a minister present and involved.

- 9 Historically individuals have been able to take up chaplaincy roles with little or no training or preparation.

These findings result in the need to address a numbers of areas in the life of the Methodist Church. Whilst ensuring a piecemeal approach was avoided, there were still two areas that were considered so weak that an immediate remedy was necessary and these are detailed below. This indicates both the urgency of the work of this review, and the desire that the Church should be as safe a place as possible for all, as quickly as is possible. There are no circumstances where delaying important developments is acceptable.

## **8.2 Developments**

In Dec 2021 the MCI process for recording safeguarding cases was strengthened. It was considered that this should not wait until an interim or final report, but on the advice of the Chair was acted upon with immediate effect and now MCI has a much more robust system in place to record and retain safeguarding relevant information.

In Dec 2021 the Secretary of Conference initiated wider consideration on the implications of a particular historic case and reported this to the PCR.

The Secretary of Conference, in consultation with the connexional HR Manager is in the process of putting into place a system for the holding of personnel files on all ministers and lay employees. This is not directly as a consequence of this this review but it emerged as a likely recommendation and so it is noted that this is being addressed.

## **9.0 Recommendations**

In order to protect all within the life of the MCI, to be as safe a space as possible, and better reflect our calling as Christian disciples and witnesses to the love of Jesus Christ, the following are recommended to be accepted by the MCI at Conference 2023 and then to be implemented with immediate effect.

### **Record Keeping**

- 1 Significant further revision to administrative processes including but not limited to record keeping to ensure that full documentation from any cases is retained, to ensure that where necessary and remaining confidential that such case notes are made available to others within the life of the Church as required and that senior Church leadership is aware of any concerns or circumstances when making decisions. This will include our stationing of ministers to appointments.
- 2 Where the Safeguarding Officer gives advice to be followed, or where another senior leader in the life of the Church gives advice to be followed, that this is given via email in addition of any other communication. This is to ensure advice is clear, that a record can be maintained and that follow up is easier to maintain.

### **Training**

- 3 The MCI needs to develop and deliver further training to assist ministers, lay employees, leaders and others in the life of the MCI to understand how to better help survivors in the life of local congregations.
- 4 MCI further reviews its training and safeguarding processes for events that are directly run by the Church or indirectly run by the Church, and that have a residential aspect.

- 5 The MCI Safeguarding training programme and processes are reviewed annually and this is reported to our annual Conference.
- 6 Greater attention is given to safeguarding in the area of social media, use of smart phones and other technological advances. The MCI needs to be at the forefront of societal developments to ensure there is no lag in the training offered and processes followed.

### **Offender contracts**

- 7 An immediate review of all 'offender contracts' in the life of the MCI. This includes developing a centrally held comprehensive list, revisiting each contact, ascertaining whether it is still active, how successful it has been and developing a process to provide regular, systematic review of such contracts.

### **Church Organisation**

- 8 The Connexional Safeguarding Board is required to ensure the full implementation of these recommendations within the year that lies ahead and report to Conference 2024 as regards this. This Board is responsible for ongoing learning from our past. This will include a formal audit of Safeguarding practice in 2028, reported to the Governance Board.

### **Theology**

- 9 The Faith and Order Committee of the Methodist Church in Ireland is requested to develop a Theology of Safeguarding, to further underpin Safeguarding in the life, witness and ministry of the church. This to be reported to Conference in 2025.

### **Personnel**

- 10 The important role of Safeguarding Officer for MCI is reviewed annually in terms of appropriate support being offered such as ongoing training and development of practices via an enhanced annual review process.

### **Pastoral Care**

- 11 The Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee is to review the Methodist Church Disciplinary Process in light of this report and with particular regard to ensuring pastoral care and support for all involved in such circumstances.

### **Disciplinary Process**

- 12 If there is a disciplinary process involving a minister, and they offer their resignation during this process, that their resignation is not accepted until the completion of the disciplinary process. For lay employees the appropriate processes will be completed.

### **Methodist institutions and Organisations**

- 13 The MCI invites the four educational institutions of which we are the patron body and where there are Boards of Governors acting on behalf of the Church, to undertake their own Reviews in a timely manner and report to their governing bodies. These are Wesley College Dublin, Methodist College Belfast, Gurteen

College Tipperary and Rathgar National School Dublin. No issues have emerged during this review process that raise any concerns and each institution has in place appropriate and robust safeguarding process. However, as part of our focus on ensuring that all aspects of the life of the MCI, including our educational institutions, are as safe as can be, and to ensure we learn as much as is possible from the past, we recommend this review process in these institutions.

14 The MCI invites related organisations including the five Methodist City Missions to undertake their own reviews of safeguarding issues in the life of their institution both in the past and in the present. Again, no issues have emerged during this review process that raise any concerns and each organisation has in place appropriate and robust safeguarding process. However, as part of our focus on ensuring that all aspects of the life of the MCI are as safe as can be, and to ensure we learn as much as is possible from the past, we recommend this review process for these organisations.

## 10.0 Conclusion

It is the intention of this report to shine such a light on our past that we can clearly see what has happened, learn from this and be a better and safer place because of this. We seek to continue to do this by implementation of the recommendations and to commit ourselves to continuing to learn.

To the best of our abilities we have:

- A) Identified and considered all past cases since 1950 that have safeguarding concerns, reviewed the response at the time, implemented any remedial action and considered any lessons to be learnt to develop stronger practices, processes and culture;
- B) Given opportunities to hear and so learn from any previously unreported cases, and investigated any such cases, implemented any necessary action and considered any lessons to be learnt to develop stronger practices, processes and culture.

We will continue to do so. We offer this report to the Methodist people in Ireland, and to wider society. As a result of this work and the implementation of the recommendations that will follow, current safeguarding policies and practices will improve. Consequently, this will ensure that everyone involved in or in any way associated with the life and ministry of the Methodist Church will be better protected both today and in the future.

Dr Deborah Webster  
Rev Dr Stephen Skuce

# APPENDIX 7A & 7B: Changes to the Manual of Laws

brought by the Connexional Team and approved by Conference

## Appendix 7A: THE HOME MISSION TEAM

### CHAPTER 15 - HOME MISSION ~~DEPARTMENT TEAM~~

~~15.01~~ The object of the Home Mission Department is to be a vehicle through which the Methodist Church in Ireland helps Districts, Circuits and local congregations to glorify God through worship and witness.

The Department seeks to enable this by:

- ~~providing grants to circuits without which they could not support the ministers appointed to them.~~
- ~~providing grants for the development of mission projects that have been approved by the Connexional Team.~~
- ~~support the inauguration and development of worship and witness in Ireland, as approved by the Connexional Team.~~
- ~~working with others to provide information, guidance, resources, and training for the Methodist Church~~

15.01 The Home Mission Team works alongside the District Superintendents, Committees/Boards of the Church and other Connexional Departments and Teams to support Districts, Circuits and local congregations to participate in the mission of God.

The purpose of the Team is:

to resource and challenge the Connexion as it implements mission strategy.

to resource and encourage the Connexion in prayer

~~15.03~~ In the autumn of each ~~Each~~ year, the Home Mission ~~Department Team~~ shall ensure that arrangements are made for Home Mission services... and to encourage financial support for the work of the Department Team...

#### Administration

~~15.04~~ The Department is administered under the direction of the Governance Board, which may discharge its responsibility through the Church Development Board.

15.04 The Home Mission Team works under the delegated authority of the Governance Board through the Connexional Team, to which it is accountable through the Secretary of Conference. Its structure shall be as follows:

1. The Connexional Officers, who shall be appointed by the Governance Board:

The General Secretary of the Home Mission Team.

The Chair of the Connexional Home Mission Advisory Group, who shall be a minister.

2. The staff team

3. The Connexional Home Mission Advisory Group

~~15.05 Two Treasurers, a minister and a layperson, shall be appointed annually by the Governance Board. The Treasurers shall keep an account in a Bank in the name of "The Methodist Home Mission Fund"; and all collections, contributions, grants, and legacies shall be remitted to them, or to either of them, for account of the Fund, and shall be lodged to the credit of this account, and payments shall be made from the Fund in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Governance Board.~~

~~15.06 A minister, whose support shall be chargeable to the Fund, may be set apart as the General Secretary of the Department, to whom all communications on its business (other than remittances to the Treasurers) shall be addressed. An Administrator and such clerical staff as approved by the Governance Board, may be engaged to assist the Secretary and Treasurers, and their salaries and expenses shall be a charge on the Department.~~

15.05 The General Secretary of the Home Mission Team shall be appointed annually by the Governance Board and act as Team Leader, to whom all communications on Team business shall be addressed. The staff team, as approved by the Governance Board, may be engaged to assist the Team Leader, and all salaries and expenses shall be a charge on the Team.

The Constitution of the Advisory Group shall be:

The Chairperson, appointed annually by the Governance Board.

The General Secretary of the Home Mission Team.

Other co-opted members with specific experience and skills.

The Advisory Group shall:

meet at least twice a year.

learn from missional practitioners in order to share this learning with the Connexion and help shape the work of the Home Mission Team.

provide pastoral care to the staff team through the Chairperson.

meet with the General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland annually.

report to the Connexional Team through the General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

keep the Governance Board apprised of its activities.

15.06. The Finance Team shall administer an account in a Bank in both jurisdictions in the name of "The Methodist Home Mission Fund" under the direction of the Team Leader. All collections, contributions, grants, and legacies remitted to the Team for account of the Funds shall be lodged by the Finance Team to the credit of these accounts, and payments shall be made from the Funds in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Governance Board.

15.07 ...Grants for ordinary expenditure shall normally be paid quarterly by the Finance Team. Treasurers in September, December, March and June. In cases of vacancies in Stations and re-arrangements of Circuits the officers of the Home Mission Department Connexional Team shall have authority to adjust the grants to the Circuits concerned...

15.08 The Governance Board is directed to frame its recommendations so as to bring the proposed expenditure of the ~~Department-Team~~ within the estimated income.

#### Ordinary Expenditure

15.09 District Superintendents shall inquire into the needs of those Circuits applying for grants from the ~~Department-Team~~ and shall recommend to the ~~Department-Team~~ the amount considered needful in each case for the ensuing calendar year. Such applications shall then be co-ordinated by the Team and brought to the ~~be examined by the Church Development Board~~ Connexional Team for examination and approval and the applications, and the recommendations or decisions of the ~~Church Development Board~~ shall be reported to the Connexional Team and included in the Minutes of the ~~Committee~~.

15.12 When required by the ~~Officers of the Home Mission Department~~ Team, a report on the life and work of the local Church and/or Circuit, the mission, needs and opportunities of the Circuit receiving the grant, shall be furnished by the District Superintendent, in consultation with the ~~through~~ the Superintendent of the Circuit.

#### Other Expenditure

15.13 Subject to such conditions as may be directed by the Governance Board, and in each case on the approval of the Board, (or the Connexional Team ~~Church Development Board~~), the ~~Department~~ Team may provide grants or loans towards the cost of:

(a) the purchase of manses

(b) furnishing of manses



- (c) repair of, or structural alterations to, manses
- (d) serious need in ministers' families, in conjunction with the Ministers' Medical Fund, which shall administer such grant.
- (e) supplies rendered necessary by the death, illness or unavoidable absence of ministers.
- (f) the needs of ministers in special circumstances as in Paragraph 13.24

~~15.14 All applications for manse grants or loans must be sanctioned by the Executive of the Circuit concerned and recommended by the District Superintendent before being considered by the Connexional Team and Governance Board.~~

~~15.15 Grants within the limit set by the Governance Board may be approved by the Treasurers of the Home Mission Department Home Mission Team in consultation with the Officers of the Church Development Board Connexional Team.~~

Ministers' residences

**(see also Chapter 13)**

~~15.16 Application for permission to purchase, or build, to repair or structurally alter any minister's residence shall be made through the District Superintendent to the Property Board. Grants for such expenditure shall normally be payable by the Home Mission Department Team.~~

~~15.17 In processing applications for manse grants for circuits, or in assessing the adequacy of a manse, the Department Team may request that the District Superintendent or other person deputed by him/her, and the Manse Steward of another Circuit, make a report to the Department Team.~~

~~15.18 Grants for repairs of manses shall not be made, unless previous to the expenditure being incurred, the sanction of the Home Mission Department Team (and in the case of structural change the Property Board) has been obtained.~~

~~15.19 Application for permission to appoint new Trustees of any Trust property shall be made through the Property Board, the Home Mission Department Team or the General Education Department, according as the property concerned consists of churches, manses or schools. If any grant be made towards the cost of the Deed of Appointment, it shall be borne by the Property Board, Home Mission Department Team, or Education Fund as may be decided by the Governance Board.~~

### **~~Revision of Circuits and Appointment of Additional Ministers~~**

~~15.22 In cases of vacancies in Stations and re-arrangements of Circuits the officers of the Home Mission Department shall have authority to adjust the grants to the Circuits concerned. (already covered by 15.07)~~

~~15.23~~ An application for an additional minister to be engaged in the regular work shall not be entertained unless a plan, stating distinctly how and where he/she is to be employed, how he/she shall be provided for, and where he/she shall reside, accompany the application. (Not required in the context of DSs, who would be approached in these circumstances)

## Home Mission Finance

~~15.27~~ Immediately on their receipt, all collections and subscriptions for the Funds of Home Mission shall be forwarded by the Circuit Treasurer to the ~~Ministerial Treasurer of the Department~~ Team. The Circuit accounts for Home Mission shall be closed on a date determined by the Governance Board. The Schedule shall be forwarded to the Department as soon as possible. ~~Any monies received after 31st December will not be included in the Circuit total for that year but entered to the credit of its account the following year.~~ (Remove for flexibility)

~~15.28~~ All applications for Extraordinary grants must be forwarded to the District Superintendent who will recommend to the Team the amount considered needful in each case and then approval will be sought from the Connexional Team. ~~General Secretary of the Home Mission Department.~~

~~15.29~~ When a bequest is left, or a donation given, to the Methodist Church in Ireland, or to the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland, without any individual Circuit, Department, or Organisation being specified or indicated, such bequest or donation, unless it exceeds £10,000 shall be considered as belonging equally to the Home Mission Department and General Purposes Fund and shall be paid to the respective Treasurers.

## Student Chaplaincy

~~15.30~~ University Chaplaincy shall be supported by necessary grants approved by the Governance Board and paid by the Home Mission ~~Department~~ Team.

## Mission Ireland

~~15.38~~ ... activities shall be funded from the annual contributions from the Circuits and such other monies as the ~~Department~~ Team is able to allocate from its own resources.

~~15.39~~ ... and shall recommend to the ~~Department~~ Team the amount considered needful in each case for the ensuing Connexional calendar year. Such applications shall ~~be examined by the Church Development Board and the recommendations or decisions of the Church Development Board shall be reported to the Governance Board and included in the Minutes of the Meeting.~~ then be co-ordinated by the Team and brought to the Connexional Team for examination and approval. Projects employing lay workers shall only be considered if operating under legislation of the Employment Advisory Group.

~~15.40~~ Church Councils and Circuit Executives shall initiate and monitor suggestions for Mission Ireland ventures at Circuit and District level and shall approve applications for support. Applications for support for Mission Ireland projects shall be made on the

appropriate form. All Mission Ireland causes shall be guided and controlled by a Circuit Executive with the exception of such causes as are under the direction of Departments of the Church. ~~When a Mission Ireland project is to be considered as a Church Development cause, application shall be made under existing Church Development legislation.~~

~~15.41~~ The Conference shall appoint a Home Mission Forum which shall have the responsibility to bring forward, and where authorised by the Connexional Team, implement proposals to further the Work of God in the Methodist Church in Ireland in the spirit of the Connexions process. A chairperson shall be appointed by the Connexional Team, and the Forum shall consist of equal numbers of ordained and lay people. ~~The President, President Designate and Ex-President shall all be entitled to attend.~~

15. Junior Mission for all

17.11 (b) Money raised for mission work by JMA shall be ~~divided between Home Mission and World Mission.~~ received by World Mission Partnership.

## **Appendix 7B: LOCAL PREACHERS**

Conference approves the following changes to Chapter 6 (Local Preachers) of the Manual of Laws:

**6A.05** Each Local Preacher is required to:

- (a) attend fellowship meetings of the Church and the Lord's Supper.
- (b) affirm annually that he/she continues to believe and preach our doctrines and to observe the discipline of the Church.

~~At the District Ministerial Synod,~~ Circuit Superintendents shall be asked to confirm annually to the District Superintendent that the Local Preachers on their Circuits have affirmed that they continue to believe and preach our doctrines and observe the discipline of the Methodist Church in Ireland and that this has been noted by the March Circuit Executive.

**6A.06** Each Local Preacher who has not retired is required to:–

- (a) commit to 15 hours of further learning or training per year.
- ~~(b) take part in the annual and ten-yearly Review process.~~

**6A.08** If a Local Preacher behaves in a manner considered by the Circuit Executive to be inappropriate or a charge is made against a Local Preacher, he/she will be subject to the Disciplinary Procedures set out below in section ~~6C~~ 6B.

**6A.17** The third Sunday in September shall be recognised as the Sunday designated for Celebration and Affirmation of the ministry of Local Preachers. A Circuit service of Celebration and Affirmation shall be arranged on each Circuit. All active Local Preachers are expected to attend this service. The order and form of this service should follow the guidance provided by the Connexional Committee.

~~**6A.18** The District Superintendent shall facilitate the 10-year Review Process for all Local Preachers, as defined in the 'Policy and Procedures relating to the Nomination, Appointment and Review of Local Preachers' published on the MCI Teams Application. The role of the District Superintendent is to facilitate the process of Review by providing support and guidance to Local Preachers and, in conjunction with the District Local Preachers' Co-ordinator, to ensure that Reviews are undertaken and completed within the required timeframe.~~

### **Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee**

~~**6A.19**~~ **6A.18** The Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee as set out in Chapter 4 of the Manual of Laws is responsible for the drafting of new and Reviewing of existing policies relating to Local Preachers. Each policy sets out key features and responsibilities. Amendments shall be agreed by the Governance Board of the Methodist Church in Ireland and reported to the Conference. The following policy is currently in operation:

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