

members were requested to indicate their preference regarding the following question posed by the Bench of Bishops:

Do you agree with the statement:

It is pastorally unsustainable for the Church to make no formal provision for those in same-gender relationships?

The result of the ballot was 76 in favour and 21 against, with one ballot paper being spoiled. The bishops did not vote. The Bench of Bishops will consider this matter further when it next meets.

TIME AND SEASONS NEW LITURGY

The Times and Seasons Liturgy has been six years in preparation. It is an online bilingual resource for those looking for more creative and evangelistic worship – from the blessing of Advent wreathes to hot cross buns – and is new liturgy to enhance worship throughout the year. It provides much new non-Eucharistic material as well as material that, though prepared for use during the Eucharist, would also be suitable for use in other services, including those led by lay people. The Governing Body was pleased to receive the new liturgy.

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General Synod of the Church of Ireland

May 2018

KATE TURNER

Member of General Synod

INTRODUCTION

This year's General Synod, the first meeting of the triennium, was held in the now familiar venue of a hotel in Armagh City. The Synod considered Bills relating to the *Book of Common Prayer*, safeguarding trust issues, the governance of St Fin Barre's Cathedral, temporary suspension of episcopal electoral colleges and General Synod membership. During the meeting of Synod a commentary on the Constitution of the Church of Ireland was launched.

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

A Bill and various amendments were considered which will include an order for Morning and Evening Prayer for use on Sundays in the *Book of Common Prayer* (2004; revised edition 2005). The format of the service is intended to provide more meaningful principal Sunday worship than that offered by the traditional forms of Morning and Evening Prayer, which were designed to be daily offices. A related Bill authorising use of collects of the Word as part of this service was withdrawn until appropriate copyright permissions have been granted.

SAFEGUARDING TRUST

Two Bills were passed amending the Constitution of the Church of Ireland in the chapters that make provision for the child protection policy Safeguarding Trust.³ One Bill extended the provisions in Chapter XVI to include ‘adults at risk of harm’ and ‘adults in need of protection’ (under the Northern Ireland legislation) and ‘vulnerable adults’ (in the Republic of Ireland guidance). The other repealed and replaced Chapter III to make better provision for the financing of the Safeguarding Trust work throughout the Church.

CATHEDRAL GOVERNANCE

A new model of governance was agreed for St Fin Barre’s Cathedral, Cork. The parochial select vestry is retained to manage the day-to-day running of the cathedral and a cathedral board is to be put in place to manage the broader issues such as conservation, restoration, legal and compliance issues, fundraising and long-term strategic planning. The Bill also added up to three additional canons to the cathedral chapter, one ecumenical canon and two honorary canons, with due regard to the needs of the diocese and the cathedral.

EPISCOPAL ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Following the 2016 report (and the withdrawn Bill) from the Commission on Episcopal Ministry, there had been ongoing discussions about a possible restructuring between the two dioceses whose boundaries had been most under consideration: Tuam, Killala & Achonry (in the Province of Armagh) and Limerick & Killaloe (in the Province of Dublin). Arising from these discussions, both diocesan councils had passed identical resolutions affirming their desire to unite both dioceses at a future date. Should agreement be forthcoming, a Bill for

3 The policy documents are available at <<http://boe.ireland.anglican.org/child-protection/safeguarding-trust>>, accessed 30 September 2018.

alteration of diocesan boundaries will be brought to the General Synod – with the consent of the two archbishops, because provincial boundary changes will be involved – and, if passed, will need the consent of the affected diocesan synods.

A Bill was therefore brought to Synod this year to allow for the temporary suspension of the constitutional requirement to call an episcopal electoral college within the prescribed period if a vacancy should arise in either diocese before 30 September 2019. There was also provision for Synod's Standing Committee to extend this date at the request of both diocesan synods – but not beyond 30 September 2020.

GENERAL SYNOD MEMBERSHIP

A Bill was brought by individual members of Synod to amend the principles on which clerical and lay representatives of General Synod are apportioned across the dioceses. The number of members of the House of Representatives – 216 clerical and 432 lay – to be returned to General Synod from each diocese is outlined in a table in Chapter I of the Constitution. There have been a number of attempts over the last 50 years to revise and reform these fixed numbers; however, the difference in population in the two political jurisdictions covered by the Church of Ireland makes this a contentious issue. While agreement is often reached that there should be a reduction of numbers, there is no agreement on how to do so. Some feel that representation should be altered to reflect better the significantly larger population within the northern dioceses (most of which are within Northern Ireland), while others feel that the more sparse and dispersed population in the southern dioceses (within the Republic of Ireland) necessitates a larger representation than simple percentages would allow.

The Bill led to a substantial debate, so much so that it impacted considerably on the timetabling of Synod. The Bill passed the first reading and a number of proposed amendments were submitted. On the second day of Synod, a private member's motion was tabled which called for the withdrawal of the Bill and a request for Standing Committee to consider the proposed Bill and the amendments and to bring a report and legislative proposals to General Synod in 2019.

COMMENTARY ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

The meeting of Synod provided an opportunity for the launch of a new publication: *A Commentary on the Constitution of the Church of Ireland*.⁴ This illustrated guide was launched by Sir Paul Girvan, a former Lord Justice of Appeal in

4 It is published by Church of Ireland Publishing and is available from <<https://store.ireland.anglican.org>> at a price of £10 or €12.

Northern Ireland who had chaired the working group that had produced it. As well as chapters covering all aspects of the life of the Church of Ireland, it includes a history, a glossary and photographs. It is an attractive publication, making the Constitution more accessible to members of the Church.

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General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church

June 2018

JOHN F STUART

Secretary General of the Church

INTRODUCTION

The General Synod met at St Paul's and St George's Church in Edinburgh from 7 to 9 June. It was the first General Synod at which the new Primus, the Most Revd Mark Strange, presided. In his charge to Synod, he preached on the love of God and the meaning of 'loving your neighbour as yourself'. The mission of the Church was about revealing God's love and making life better for all, not just for church members.

CHILD POVERTY

A particular focus of the meeting was a session from the Church in Society Committee on child poverty. The Synod was addressed by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Galloway, the Rt Revd William Nolan, on the *Give Me Five* campaign: an initiative calling upon the Scottish Government to pay a top-up on child benefit of £5 per week. Synod heard at first hand of specific local initiatives undertaken by St Andrew's Cathedral, Inverness, to alleviate child poverty, including a holiday lunch club for school-age children, a breakfast club and banks to provide school uniforms, toiletries and winter jackets. After debate, the Synod supported a motion endorsing the *Give Me Five* campaign.

ALTERATIONS TO CANONS AND RESOLUTIONS

Changes to the Church's Code of Canons require a two-year process: a first reading at General Synod, followed by consideration of the proposed change