

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2018



Moderator Installed

- Rev Fakaofu Kaio was installed as the Moderator for 2018-2020 in a special service at the Centennial Chapel, Christchurch.

Memorial minutes

- Assembly today approved that Memorial Minutes for 19 ministers be placed in the records of the Assembly.

Ordination anniversaries

- Assembly acknowledged ordination anniversaries and the Moderator extended congratulations to all those who will celebrate these milestones before GA20.

Moderator-Designate

- Rev Hamish Galloway was announced as the Moderator-Designate. He will be Moderator of the General Assembly for the period 2020-2022.
- Read more here: www.presbyterian.org.nz/about-us/general-assembly



Supplementary Provisions ratified

- Updates to the Conditions of Service Manual and the Code of Ethics, which were issued in March 2018, were ratified by General Assembly.

General Assembly accounts

- Assembly received the audited accounts for the year ending 30 June 2018. The Council of Assembly was authorised to sign the audited accounts on behalf of General Assembly.

Book of Order changes – Chapter 15 discipline

- Assembly adopted changes to the chapter 15 (Discipline) of the Book of Order.
- Assembly was advised that these changes were required urgently and the Book of Order Advisory Committee advised of its intention to bring comprehensive changes to this chapter to the 2020 General Assembly.

Book of Order changes

- A range of technical corrections to the Book of Order were approved by General Assembly.
- Assembly adopted under special legislative procedure, changes to chapter 8 (Presbytery), chapter 5 (Congregation), chapter 10 (Ministry Settlement and Termination), chapter 14 (Meetings of Church in Assembly).



- Assembly agreed that a variety of changes to the Book of Order be accepted and remitted to presbyteries and church councils under special legislative procedure.
- Assembly adopted some changes to the Book of Order as interim provisions having force until GA next meets

Moderator election process

Assembly agreed to a revised process for the election of the Moderator of General Assembly:

- Church councils will be invited to submit up to four suitable nominees to their presbytery or synod. Signed permission of the nominees must accompany the nomination. Church councils are responsible for including a 150-word statement about their candidates' wider church experience and suitability for office.
- From the nominations of church councils within its bounds, each presbytery or synod will nominate two candidates for the position of Moderator Designate of General Assembly.
- Presbytery nominations will then be sent to the Assembly Executive Secretary for inclusion on a ballot paper.
- A preferential voting system will be used. Church councils will vote for four candidates, listing them in order of preference.
- Votes will be counted by the Assembly Executive Secretary, and overseen by a Justice of the Peace.

For full details of the new election process, see the General Assembly minutes.



Mission Enterprise Fund exemption clause

- Assembly approved a change to Supplementary Provisions that address an anomaly in the exemption clause for contribution to the Mission Enterprise Fund.
- The revised wording clarifies that manse sale proceeds used to fund a new worship centre do qualify for the exemption, and vice versa.
- Under previous rules, a parish could only be exempt from contributing 10 percent of the net sale proceeds of a parish property to the Mission Enterprise Fund (MEF) if a manse was being sold to replace a manse, or a worship centre sold to replace a worship centre.
- Assembly noted that some parishes have been unfairly disadvantaged by the inequity of the exemption clause and recommended to PressGo that it make grants to parishes, in line with the spirit and intent of the revised exemption clause. Parishes must apply by 31May 2019 if they believe they are eligible.

Moderator's role

Assembly agreed that:

- the term of a Moderator's office remain as two years
- the position of Moderator be up to full-time
- any person who has already served a term as Moderator is ineligible for nomination



- in the six months prior to taking office, the Moderator-Designate can be supported on a .33FTE basis to allow preparation and orientation time for the office.
- The Moderator be encouraged to establish a support group to support him/her for the duration of their term
- Allowance be made for the spouse or other support person to accompany the Moderator when travelling.
- Stipend-based remuneration be negotiated with the incoming Moderator.

Assembly agreed that the key tasks for the Moderator be:

- Moderator of the General Assembly
- Ceremonial and celebration – the Moderator is to represent the Church at significant national and international gatherings and participate in ecumenical joint statements where appropriate
- Mission – listen and share the missional direction of the Church with its members and encourage mission at all levels within the Church.
- Pastoral presence – be a pastor at large and be a voice of encouragement to the Church
- Contribute to policy formulation.

National Committees

- Assembly approved the membership of national church committees, work groups and nationally appointed bodies.



Pacific Presbytery

- General Assembly affirmed a change of name from Pacific Islands Synod to Pacific Presbytery.
- Assembly approved changes to the Book of Order to give effect to the name change.

Presbyterian Support NZ

- Assembly encouraged presbyteries and congregations to continue to engage in joint activities with Presbyterian Support and PresCare in their areas.
- Assembly asked the Council of Assembly to consider continuing to support, in the next budget round, the Church's annual contributions to the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services and PresCare.

Social Voice Task Group

- Assembly acknowledged its understanding of “social voice” to mean both words and action used and expressed in engaging with, and addressing, the social issues of the day.
- Assembly asked the Moderator to form close working relationships with the heads of other organisations with a social voice, and be alert to the possibility of joint or complementary statements on issues of the day.
- Assembly encouraged presbyteries to engage with the social voice report and to identify and support networking opportunities in their regions.



Code of Ethics

- Assembly commended the Code of Ethics and the work the committee has done.
- Assembly asked Council of Assembly to establish a workgroup to develop ways for ministers, employees and volunteers working in the church to have regular engagement with the Code through things like discussion, training, education, orientation and induction processes, profile on the Church's website, and inclusion in contracts and supervision agreements.
- In response to concerns about the financial liabilities faced by church officers under the Health and Safety at Work Act (2015) and the relative liabilities of volunteer workers under the Act, Assembly asked that the matter be referred to the Council of Assembly with a view to raising risk awareness.

InterChurch Bioethics

- Assembly agreed that presbyteries and national groups be encouraged to invite the InterChurch Bioethics Council and Enquiring Minds to lead discussion of bioethics issues at regional gatherings.

Church property commission

- Assembly approved the members of the Commission that deals with matters referred to it by the Church property trustees and matters related to the relevant Act.



Care for Creation

- Assembly committed to reducing our impact on the environment, acknowledging the important role Christians play in being stewards of God's creation.
- That this Assembly endorse the list of achievable and measurable actions aimed at reducing our collective impact on the environment.
- That this list of actions be sent to every church council, church school and social service agency with a connection to the Presbyterian Church for implementation.
- Assembly asked every church council to report on the progress of implementation of the actions through their annual report to presbytery (and their parish review).

Assembly also agreed to expand the list of actions in section five of proposal to include:

- Reduce transport-related atmospheric carbon inputs by encouraging participation in local congregations and sharing together in the revelations of congregations.
- Promotion of cycling by providing cycle stands at churches.
- Use church land (or make it available to community groups) for community gardens and/or restoration plantings.



Presbyterian Women

- Assembly agreed to support and actively encourage each presbytery to institute a quick and agile process to facilitate participation in civil democracy through submissions on public issues including parliamentary bills and statutory enquiries.
- Assembly agreed to review Book of Order regulation 8.9 (1) (f) in light of changing structures of Presbyterian Women.
- Assembly agreed that presbytery membership regulations in the Book of Order be amended to allow “at least two representatives of PWANZ chosen by the executive of that organisation to represent them”.

Accra Confession

- Assembly commended the Accra Confession to congregations and presbyteries for study.

Co-operative Ventures

- General Assembly ratified amendments to sections 2-7 of the Procedures for Co-operative Ventures (2012) brought by UCANZ.
- Assembly agreed that the current UCANZ Partner Support Fund be terminated at the end of June 2019 and financial assessments from 1 July 2019 be compulsory.
- The General Assembly request the UCANZ standing committee to undertake a review of those arrangements by July 2023.



Euthanasia

- General Assembly declared it does not support provision for euthanasia and assisted suicide as proposed in the End of Life Choice Bill.
- Grounds given are that legally sanctioned provision for doctors to actively end people's lives is ethically unacceptable and endangers public safety.
- General Assembly urges:
 - Parliament to respect the dignity and value of all human lives, to stringently protect society's most vulnerable, and not to pass the End of Life Choice Bill.
 - Government to significantly increase spending for palliative, hospice, mental health, disability and elderly services.
- These resolutions be communicated to the church at large, MPs and to media.
- General Assembly referred the Doctrine Core Group's report on euthanasia to church councils and congregations for study.
- General Assembly urges presbyteries and church councils to renew ministry to the aged and vulnerable and to explore ways to contribute financially to palliative, hospice, mental health, disability and elderly care. The government is urged to do likewise.



Peace on Korean Peninsula

- General Assembly expressed its support for all steps made towards peace on the Korean peninsula by all parties involved around the world, especially North and South Korea.
- Assembly asked that a prayer for peace be formulated and distributed to all congregations, to pray together as a body of Christ for peace on the Korean peninsula.
- That General Assembly affirms our belief in God, who reconciled us to Him through Jesus Christ, and who calls us to be peacemakers, can also bring peace to the painfully persisting conflict on the Korean peninsula to enable reconciliation and restoration between two countries of one people.

Youth Commissioners

- In relation to commissioners for General Assembly, Assembly agreed that the term “youth commissioner” be changed to “young adult commissioner”.

Te Reo Commissioner

- Assembly agreed to appoint a Te Reo Commissioner to promote and extend the use of Te Reo Maori within the Church, especially by facilitating the provision of liturgical material.

Diversity in leadership

- Assembly declined to uphold a proposal which asked for the book Changing our Minds by Prof David Gushee to be made



available to all parishes, and for parishes to be urged to take up study wherever possible with neighbouring parishes of differing viewpoints.

Westminster confession

- Assembly approved that several statements within the *Westminster Confession of Faith* be seen in their historical context, not in the light of today's better respect and stronger relationships between the PCANZ and the Catholic Church.
- The new website reference is: The historic *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1646) is one of the subordinate standards of PCANZ, along with the contemporary *Kupu Whakapono* (2010).

Assembly decisions

- For full details of all Assembly decisions, check out the Assembly minutes which will be published on the website in November.
- Videos and images are available for download on the Church's website along with daily news summaries and other useful information from Assembly.

www.presbyterian.org.nz

