

This Paper contains pieces of business/resolutions that the 2016 General Assembly at Southport was keen for local churches to take forward. There are five (5) of them. Please note that the main references are the General Assembly Book of Reports Southport Convention Centre 8 to 11 July 2016 and the Record of General Assembly, Southport 2016. These are on the URC website.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION AND ACTION BY LOCAL CHURCHES

Resolution number	Matter for consideration and action	Book of Report page number	Record page number
12	iChurch	60, 63	27
21	What is the Spirit saying to the Churches?	119-127	15, 28-29
31 & 32	Environmental Policy	185-190	24
49	'Change the Story' around refugees		10
50	The European Union Referendum		29

iChurch

From Communication Committee's Report on Page 63.

5.4 The committee fully supports iChurch, the out-of-the-box United Reformed Church website solution developed by the Windermere Centre. iChurch is built on the Wordpress blogging software and provides an easy-to-use, cost-effective, supported and flexible web solution. We commend its use to local churches, affiliated church groups and the synods. For more information please see the report from the Windermere Centre on pages 75-77 and/or contact Rebecca Gudgeon at the Windermere Centre at rebecca.wincen@gmail.com.

From The Windermere Centre's Report on Page 76.

6.10 iChurch is the out-of-the-box URC church website solution built on Wordpress blogging software. It ships with a template populated with dummy content, instructions and annual hosting. Designed to be maintained by people with no specialist knowledge of Wordpress or coding, different packages are available, from instructions-only, through training to full maintenance by the centre. We are looking at securing funding to appoint a full time administrator.

Resolution 12

General Assembly commends iChurch, as its preferred website supplier, to local churches, affiliated groups and the synods.

Assembly agreed this unanimously.

What is the Spirit saying to the Churches?

From Faith and Order Committee's Report

Resolution 21

General Assembly:

a) reaffirms the work of the Faith and Order Committee on 'What the Spirit is Saying to the Churches?'

b) welcomes the celebratory statements and affirmations on pages 123-127 of the Book of Reports and commends them to local churches, encouraging them to share good news stories with the wider Church.

c) instructs the Faith and Order Committee and the Walking the Way steering group to work closely together on the production of materials that focus on and deepen the URC's understanding of its distinctive identity.

The resolution was agreed by consensus.

A prayer for the United Reformed Church (Book of Reports on Page 122)

Speak Holy Spirit, speak.

Speak like a gentle breeze comforting us in our fearfulness;

Speak like a mighty gale to shake us out of false security;

Speak like a dove to bring peace in our hearts, amongst our people, in this world.

Environmental Policy for the United Reformed Church

From Mission Committee's Report

(Fuller information is given in Paper G of Synod Together, October 2016)

Resolution 31

General Assembly adopts the Environmental Policy, and encourages all committees, synods and local churches to do their best to implement it.

The resolution was agreed by consensus.

Resolution 32

General Assembly resolves to appoint a task group until 31 July 2022 in the first instance, of four persons, to be appointed by the nominations committee and funded from the mission committee budget, to monitor the United Reformed Church's progress toward meeting its commitment to reduce its carbon footprint, reporting to the mission committee.

The task group's specific remit shall be to:

- a) compile, produce or commission resources for worship and teaching related to themes contained in the Environmental Policy;**
- b) consider the budgetary implications of implementing the Environmental Policy;**
- c) commission a suitable individual or body to calculate the Church's carbon footprint, enabling a benchmark to be set against which future reductions in this footprint may be made; and**
- d) liaise with the United Reformed Church investment committee, and to assist the relevant bodies within the United Reformed Church regarding decisions relating to the investment of Church funds in fossil fuels.**

After discussion, the resolution was passed recognising disagreement.

'Change the Story' around refugees

Emergency business

Resolution 49

General Assembly commends the Christian Aid campaign to 'Change the Story' around refugees and encourages local churches and members to contact local media to tell positive stories of refugees made welcome in our communities.

General Assembly encourages support of this campaign on social media (#changethestory).

After brief debate, this was agreed unanimously.

The European Union Referendum

From Mission Committee's Report

Resolution 50

On the 23 June a referendum took place within the United Kingdom regarding the question of European Union membership. The majority of those who participated within this referendum voted for the UK to leave this union. In the light of the UK's 2016 European Union membership vote, General Assembly:

- Recalls that the Gospel mandates us to respect all people, love our neighbour and offer hospitality to strangers. In light of the decision to leave the EU, and the hurt and anxiety that many people across our nations feel, it believes that the Church's responsibility now is to be a voice of love, hope, inclusion and compassion;
- Affirms the value of being a diverse and multicultural society and calls on local churches to continue to build bridges of understanding and trust with all parts of their communities;
- Celebrates the URC's Reformed European heritage and identity, and commits to ongoing ecumenical relationships with partner churches across Europe;
- Celebrates the contributions that nationals of other European countries make to the UK and commits to stand in solidarity with them at a time of uncertainty;
- Calls on local churches and members of the URC to challenge incidences of racism and hate crime and report them through the appropriate channels;
- Expresses concern and sadness about the deep inequalities within British society and calls upon URC members to lobby their elected representatives calling for a fairer society;
- Calls on all those in the URC to pray for wisdom and honesty for those involved in negotiating the terms of the UK's exit from the EU and for those who currently feel marginalised by the decision;
- Recognises that the URC is a Church in three nations and so calls upon the Synod of Scotland to engage in and contribute to the public processes and ecumenical responses specific to Scotland which may emerge;
- Encourages members of the URC to continue to engage with the ongoing political and social debate on this topic and to challenge misinformation.

The resolution was agreed by consensus.