

# Paper N1

## Appointment of the Moderator of the Synod of Scotland

### Officers of the General Assembly

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	The Revd Dr John P Bradbury (General Secretary) <a href="mailto:john.bradbury@urc.org.uk">john.bradbury@urc.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	Decision.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Mission Council, acting on behalf of the General Assembly appoints the Revd Paul Whittle as Moderator of the National Synod of Scotland from 1 January 2021 until December 31 2023.</b>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	The appointment of a Synod Moderator to engage in a piece of interim ministry with the Synod of Scotland.
<b>Main points</b>	
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	The Officers of the Synod of Scotland and the Executive of the Synod of Scotland.

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	

Following the call of the Revd David Pickering back to local pastorate ministry in September 2020, conversations between the Officers of the General Assembly and the Officers of the Synod of Scotland led to the conclusion that an appointment of a Synod Moderator for a shorter than usual period of time, and more swiftly than might be usual, would be helpful. This would be understood as appointing a Moderator of the Synod to undertake a piece of interim ministry work within the Synod.

David Pickering's service as Moderator was for a period of four years, which concluded at the September meeting of the Synod at which he was warmly thanked for his service.

The Synod has faced some complex and difficult governance issues in the last couple of years that had their roots deep in the past. Whilst an effective plan has been put in place

to enable the Synod to resolve these issues and move forward constructively, there is some pastoral hurt left by recent episodes.

Given this context, and the concern expressed by the Officers of the Synod and the Executive of the Synod, the Officers of the Assembly determined to explore a potential appointment for an interim period.

The Revd Paul Whittle commended himself to the Officers as someone to approach to consider whether he might feel called to service in this way. Paul was ordained and served his first pastorate in Scotland, a nation with which he has considerable affinity. He also brings long experience as a Synod Moderator, and has a sufficient period of service to offer before his anticipated retirement date to offer effective ministry, but equally to allow the Synod to move to making an appointment using the normal processes and for a standard term sooner rather than later. Having been approached, Paul agreed that this was a piece of ministry he felt he might have a call to exercise and agreed to explore the possibility further through an appointment process which might lead to a nomination.

The Executive of the Synod of Scotland were invited to appoint four members of a nominating group and did so: the Revd Fiona Bennett; the Revd Andy Braunston; Mrs. Lesley Richmond and Dr Jim Merilees. Given the circumstance and the pressure of time, they were joined by three of the Officers of the General Assembly to form a nomination group: The Revd Dr John Bradbury, the Revd Clare Downing and the Revd Michael Hopkins.

The Revd Whittle was invited to draft a minister's profile. Having considered this, the nominating group determined to meet with Paul, and in a Zoom meeting in late September, Paul made a presentation and was interviewed. The panel discerned a strong match between the gifts and graces that Paul brings to ministry and the needs of the Synod. It is our conviction that a call from God was discerned and Paul was invited to accept a nomination which he did.

It is our conviction that Paul's pastoral gifts, his long experience of the role of a Moderator, and his understanding of the Scottish context fit him well for the demands of this piece of ministry.

The appointment runs to the end of December 2023. This runs slightly beyond Paul's expected retirement date of August 2023. This is to allow the ministry to run for a full three years, a period of time which for this piece of interim ministry may be desirable. It does not prevent Paul from retiring in August 2023 if that seems appropriate, but means that would that extra period of time enable this piece of transitional ministry to reach a better conclusion, we would not need to seek an extension from Mission Council or General Assembly for this to happen.