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MODERATOR OF THE 146<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
The Rev. Daniel D. Scott, B.A., M.C.S., M.Div., D.Min.

August 26, 2021

**TO: Clerks of Presbytery**  
**FROM: Stephen Kendall, Principal Clerk**  
**RE: Actions of the 2021 General Assembly for the Attention of Presbyteries**

Dear Clerks of Presbytery,

Please find below, the General Assembly referrals for your attention and action. The remits from the Assembly are included in a separate package to you. Once again, this year, the Assembly Office will send the session referrals directly to Clerks of Session. This will save you the task of reproducing and distributing these referrals through your presbytery. I am, however, including a copy of the session referrals letter in your material for your information. Electronic copies of the referrals letters (and the documents noted for study and report) are available online at [presbyterian.ca/referrals](https://presbyterian.ca/referrals).

**1. STUDY AND REPORT**

**1.1 Church Doctrine Committee**

Study: Living in God's Mission Today

This study can be found at A&P 2021, p. 265–90 and at [presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](https://presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals).

Note: The committee welcomes the feedback of the church on this study.

**1.2 Recommendation CDC-003** (A&P 2021, p. 296, 50)

That the updated edicts and preambles for ordination, induction and admission of the minister of Word and Sacrament and of the ruling elders be circulated to sessions and presbyteries for study and report comments to the Committee on Church Doctrine through the Clerks of Assembly by January 31, 2022.

The report can be found at A&P 2021, p.292–96 and at [presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](https://presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals).

**1.3 Recommendation CDC-004** (A&P 2017, p. 241–73, A&P 2021, p. 298, 49, [presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](https://presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals))

That congregations, presbyteries and agencies be encouraged to discuss possible change to the title, from “Physician Assisted Suicide” to “Physician Assisted Suicide: Medical Assistance in Dying” and report comments to the Committee on Church Doctrine through the Clerks of Assembly by January 31, 2022.

The report can be found at A&P 2017, p. 241–73. An update to the report can be found at A&P 2021, p. 298 and [presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](https://presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals).

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- 1.4 Recommendation CLK-001** (A&P 2021, p. 304, 54, [presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](https://www.presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals))  
That the proposed amendment to Book of Forms 8.1 (A&P 2021, p. 302–04) be referred to sessions and presbyteries for study and report to the Clerks of Assembly by January 31, 2022.

8.1 A session has standing leave to meet during the sittings of the General Assembly. ~~provided always that in the event of such a meeting, any member who was a commissioner to the Assembly shall have liberty, on his/her return or when the minutes are confirmed, to dissent or dissent and complain (see sections 381, 382) from any decision taken during his/her absence while attending the Assembly.~~

- 1.5 Recommendation CLK-003** (A&P 2021, p. 308, 54, [presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](https://www.presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals))  
That the above guidelines to facilitate calls and election of LGBTQI candidates be commended to sessions, congregations and presbyteries.

The report can be found at A&P 2021, p. 306–08, Appendix 310–11 and at [presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](https://www.presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals).

- 1.6 Recommendation CLK-004** (A&P 2021, p. 309, 54)  
That sessions, congregations and presbyteries be invited to share feedback with the Clerks of Assembly by January 31, 2022, with a view to improving these guidelines and that the Clerks of Assembly report to a future General Assembly regarding possible revisions.

- 1.7 Recommendation CLK-015** (A&P 2021, p. 318, 54, [presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](https://www.presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals))  
That the proposed amendment to Book of Forms section 176.1, be referred to sessions and presbyteries for study and report to the Clerks of Assembly by January 31, 2021. (A&P 2021, p. 317–18 and at [presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](https://www.presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals))

176.1 Ordained ministers within the bounds, whose ministry is carried out on a minimum of a half-time basis and not as a complement to some other vocational pursuit and:

- 1.8 Recommendation LMA-048** (A&P 2021, p. 532, 38, [presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](https://www.presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals))  
That the above proposed revisions to the Guidelines for Dealing with Mental Health Issues (2011) (A&P 2021, p. 519–32), be sent to the courts and committees of the church for study and report to the Life and Mission Agency by January 31, 2022, with the goal of presenting a final report to the General Assembly in 2022.

## **2. EXPRESSIONS OF APPRECIATION**

- 2.1 Recommendation ADV-003** (A&P 2021, p. 201, 12)  
That the thanks of the Assembly be extended to congregations, individuals, presbyteries, synods, organizations, international, ecumenical and inter-faith partners who warmly welcomed and graciously offered hospitality to the Rev. Amanda Currie.

## **3. INFORMATION/ACTION**

- 3.1 Recommendation EIR-ADD 1** (A&P 2021, p. 26)  
That in light of the recent directed attack against a Muslim family in London, Ontario, leading to the death of four and critical injury of the fifth family member, it is moved that the Moderator of the 2021 General Assembly send a letter of condolence and encouragement to the National Muslim-Christian Liaison Committee: condolence for this attack that is a visible sign of an underlying evil; encouragement for the committee's ongoing dialogue and work.

- 3.2 Recommendation CDC-001** (A&P 2021, p. 290–92, 49,  
[presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](https://www.presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals))  
That the Statement on the Christian Use of Cannabis be received as a statement of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.
- A report on the Christian Use of Cannabis is found at A&P 2021, p. 290–91 and at [presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](https://www.presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals).
- 3.3 Recommendation HIS-004** (A&P 2021, p. 327, 46)  
That presbyteries, congregations, groups and individuals be encouraged to support the national campaign for and contribute to the Presbyterian Church Heritage Centre.
- 3.4 Recommendation IAF-003** (A&P 2021, p. 339, 40)  
That individuals, congregations, sessions and presbyteries be encouraged to make use of the resource “Human Trafficking in Canada: A leadership and learning kit for Churches” produced by the Canadian Council of Churches. ([councilofchurches.ca/social-justice/human-trafficking-in-canada](https://councilofchurches.ca/social-justice/human-trafficking-in-canada))
- 3.5 Recommendation IAF-008** (A&P 2021, p. 344, 40)  
That courts of the church and their ministries be encouraged to create policies for environmentally sustainable use of churches, buildings and properties and that these policies be applied to rental groups.
- 3.6 Recommendation IAF-017** (A&P 2021, p. 40)  
That Presbyterians be encouraged, once pandemic travel restrictions are eased, to plan a “Come and See” visit to the Palestinian Territories using a Palestinian Tour company and that advance preparation include reference material such as “A Code of Conduct for Tourism in the Holy Land: A Palestinian Initiative”: prepared by the Alternative Tourism Group in cooperation with Kairos Palestine.
- 3.7 Recommendation LMA-010** (A&P 2021, p. 418, 38)  
That the findings of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls as expressed in its final report, “Reclaiming Power and Place” be accepted by the church.  
“Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls” can be found at [mniwg-ffada.ca](https://mniwg-ffada.ca).
- 3.8 Recommendation LMA-011** (A&P 2021, p. 418, 38)  
That Presbyterians be encouraged to study and respond to the report and learn more about the effects of colonialism and how to decolonize, through such means as congregational or presbytery reading groups, resources or workshops prepared by Justice Ministries or engaging with community events, groups and advocacy focused on the report’s findings.
- 3.9 Recommendation LMA-012** (A&P 2021, p. 418, 38)  
That Presbyterians be encouraged to familiarize themselves with the National Inquiry’s Calls for Justice, particularly those aimed at all Canadians (Calls 15.1–15.8) and those aimed at occupations and industries in which they are employed and respond accordingly.  
The “Calls for Justice for all Canadians” report can be found at A&P 2021, p. 418 and [presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](https://www.presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals).

**3.10 Recommendation LMA-013** (A&P 2021, p. 418, 38)

That presbyteries be encouraged to create groups that explore and plan opportunities for relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

**3.11 Recommendation LMA-015** (A&P 2021, p. 421, 38)

That congregations, presbyteries and synods be encouraged to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius by taking the actions suggested in this report.

“Repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery in Practice” can be found at A&P 2021, 419–21 and [presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](https://presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals).

**3.12 Recommendation LMA-018** (A&P 2021, p. 429, 38)

That congregations and presbyteries be encouraged to study racism and xenophobia in Canada, especially ways the church can contribute to ending racism and xenophobia in Canada and in the church.

The report on “Racism, Xenophobia and Hate in Canada” can be found at A&P 2021, p. 427–29 and at [presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](https://presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals).

**3.13 Recommendation LMA-020** (A&P 2021, p. 432, 38)

That presbyteries, sessions and individuals be encouraged to study The Presbyterian Church in Canada’s July 2020 “Statement Regarding Violence and Encounters between Indigenous People and Policing Agencies”.

The “Statement Regarding Violence and Encounters between Indigenous People and Policing Agencies” can be found at A&P 2021, p. 430–32 and at [presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](https://presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals).

**3.14 Recommendation LMA-035** (A&P 2021, p. 38)

That the following be the process for ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacraments to a non-traditional ministry position:

1. Presbyteries and the Committee on Education and Reception shall inquire diligently whether the non-traditional ministry position meets the criteria for ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacraments in accordance with the Theology of Ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments adopted by the 2008 GA (A&P 2008, p. 353–65) and in particular the following:
  - Does the ministry position require full exercise of the ministry of Word and Sacraments?
  - Is presbytery permitted to recognize the ministry as a valid context for service by ministers of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, such that it may place the name of the minister, once ordained, on the constituent roll of the presbytery?
  - Is the offer of the position properly understood to represent the call of this church to a particular ministry?
  - Does the presbytery recognize the ministry position as a gospel call to the candidate?
  - Is the presbytery prepared to enter a relationship of care for the minister, who will be accountable to the presbytery for his or her ministry while serving or living within the bounds, as legislated?
2. The presbytery, to which as corporate bishop pertains the power to ordain, is urged to act responsibly in this matter of ordination, ensuring that all criteria for ordination have been

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met. While presbytery decisions are normally approved by a simple majority vote, they are encouraged to strive for a high degree of consensus in these cases.

The report is available in the A&P 2021, p 419–21 and at [presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](http://presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals).

- 3.15 Recommendation LMA-043** (A&P 2021, p. 514, 38)  
That members of congregations, sessions and presbyteries be encouraged to write to or meet with their municipally elected officials to inquire how they are responding to Call to Action No. 57.
- 3.16 Recommendation LMA-044** (A&P 2021, p. 519, 38)  
That the above Policy and Procedures for Addressing Harassment in the Church be approved.  
The report “Workplace harassment” can be found in the A&P 2021, p. 515–19 and at [presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](http://presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals).
- 3.17 Recommendation LMA-050** (A&P 2021, p. 543, 38)  
That the Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth be endorsed.
- 3.18 Recommendation LMA-051** (A&P 201, p. 543, 38)  
That the Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth be circulated to congregations, worshiping communities, social ministries, camps, presbyteries, synods and colleges.  
The report on the “Joint Statement on Physical Punishment of Children and Youth” can be found in the 2021 A&P, p. 532–43 and at [cpa.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/resources/antibullying/joint\\_statement\\_e.pdf](http://cpa.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/resources/antibullying/joint_statement_e.pdf)
- 3.19 Recommendation LMA-054** (A&P 2021, p. 543, 38)  
That in line with the Calls to Action No. 6 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, courts and individuals within The Presbyterian Church in Canada be encouraged to write to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice and their member of Parliament advocating the full protection of children, including the repeal of Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada.
- 3.20 Recommendation PAB-010** (A&P 2021, p. 578, as amended, p. 56)  
That presbyteries be encouraged to collect and analyse data regarding pay equity within the bounds and seek to identify and address any situations where gender discrimination exists.
- 3.21 Recommendation PAB-011** (A&P 2021, p. 578, as amended, p. 56)  
That, to further assist presbyteries in eliminating stipend inequalities based on gender, presbyteries be encouraged to amend their standing orders such that interim moderators disclose and explain to the appropriate presbytery committee what differences exist between the stipend provided to the last incumbent and the guarantee of stipend in the call to the new minister and why such differences may exist.
- 3.22 Recommendation RCL-001** (A&P 2021, p. 593, 22)  
That the gratitude of the General Assembly be extended to all who have told their stories as part of the Special Listening Committee re LGBTQI (Rainbow Communion).
- 3.23 Recommendation RCL-002** (A&P 2021, p. 617, 22)  
That The Presbyterian Church in Canada affirm that all people whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity are equally beloved by God.

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- 3.24 Recommendation RCL-005** (A&P 2021, p. 654, 22)  
That members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada be encouraged to participate in the service of worship that gives public expression to the confession for harm done to LGBTQI people and to work individually and as congregations and the courts of the church to live out this confession and commitment so that harm does not continue.
- 3.25 Recommendation RCL-007** (A&P 2021, p. 657, 22)  
That the Life and Mission Agency, together with synods, presbyteries, sessions and theological colleges encourage the development of organic networks of support groups and formalized pastoral care relationships across the church, both in person and online, to provide resources, guidance and care for people who identify as LGBTQI and in particular for serving and retired clergy and for family members of LGBTQI people.
- 3.26 Recommendation RCL-009** (A&P 2021, p. 658, 22)  
That The Presbyterian Church in Canada reject without qualification the false claim that those who identify as LGBTQI are any more likely to be involved in paedophilia or the molestation or abuse of children or vulnerable adults than any other persons.
- 3.27 Recommendation RCL-010** (A&P 2021, p. 659, 22)  
That The Presbyterian Church in Canada, through the Life and Mission Agency, provide a means for people to safely tell their stories of abuse and offer an appropriate pastoral response.
- 3.28 Recommendation RCL-011** (A&P 2021, p. 661, 22)  
That with the support of the resources from the Life and Mission Agency, the courts of the church, agencies, colleges and camps review and update their policies, procedures and practices, including the language used, by June 2022, to ensure they reflect the full inclusion of all people.
- 3.29 Recommendation RCL-014** (A&P 2021, p. 664, 22)  
That all congregations, presbyteries, synods and committees be encouraged to consult with the Program Coordinator Sexuality and Inclusion, concerning the ongoing work of resource and policy development, education and support for the full inclusion of LGBTQI people in all dimensions of the ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.
- 3.30 Recommendation RCL-015** (A&P 2021, p. 665, 22)  
That committees to nominate at all levels and in all courts of the church, be urged and encouraged to include LGBTQI representation in the membership of committees of the sessions, presbyteries, synods, colleges and the General Assembly.
- 3.31 Recommendation RCL-016** (A&P 2021, p. 667, 22)  
That identifying as LGBTQI and/or being in a same-sex marriage not be grounds for discipline and censure in The Presbyterian Church in Canada.
- 3.32 Recommendation RCL-017** (A&P 2021, p. 668, 22)  
That all congregations, presbyteries, synods and theological colleges be encouraged to use the Life and Mission Agency updated resources for worship and to review their own practices and the language that they use in worship.
- 3.33 Recommendation RCL-020** (A&P 201, p. 670, 22)  
That this report and its recommendations together with the supporting resources be commended to congregations, the Life and Mission Agency and the courts of the church to assist in the process of reconciliation.



The full report can be found at [Rainbow Communion: Special LGBTQI Listening Committee | The Presbyterian Church in Canada.](#)

- 3.34 The 2021 minimum stipend schedule** can be found at A&P 2021, p. 238–39 and at [presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals](http://presbyterian.ca/gao/ga2021/2021referrals).

#### **4. LEGISLATION (REMITTS, INTERIM or DECLARATORY ACTS)**

- 4.1 Remits A, B and C (2019)** were approved, and the Book of Forms has been amended as follows:

**4.1.1 Remit A, 2019 re Book of Forms Section 108-108.3 re Length of Term Service for Elders** (A&P 2021, p. 583)

108. Elders, once lawfully called to the office, and having gifts of God to exercise the same, are ordained for life. They may serve in the office for life unless deposed or suspended in process of discipline. They may, however, at the call of a congregation in which the session has instituted term service for elders, fulfill the duties of the eldership on the session normally for periods of six years but may stand for re-election at the end of each term.

108.1 Any session desiring to opt for term service for elders should consult with the congregation and must notify the presbytery of its intention and receive that court's permission.

108.2 In congregations that have instituted term service for elders, normally one third of the session shall be elected every two years. Sessions opting for an alternative term shall establish a consistent term of service and frequency of election, which shall be subject to approval by the presbytery.

108.3 Elders may resign the active exercise of the office at any time during their term of service. (Declaratory Act 1985, p. 261, 52)

**4.1.2 Remit B, 2019 re Definition of Marriage** (A&P 2021, p. 27, 583–84)

The Presbyterian Church in Canada holds two parallel definitions of marriage and recognizes that faithful, Holy Spirit filled, Christ centred, God honouring people can understand marriage as a covenant relationship between a man and a woman or as a covenant relationship between two adult persons. That congregations, sessions, ruling and teaching elders be granted liberty of conscience and action on marriage.

**4.1.3 Remit C, 2019 re Ordination of LGBTQI persons (married or single)** (A&P 2021, p. 28)

That congregations and presbyteries may call and ordain as ministers and elect and ordain as ruling elders LGBTQI persons (married or single) with the provision that liberty of conscience and action regarding participation in ordinations, inductions and installations be granted to ministers and ruling elders.

**4.2 Recommendation CLK-006** (A&P 2021, as amended, p. 55)

**Declaratory Act re active participation at ordinations, inductions and installations**

That Book of Forms section 11.2 be revised through a Declaratory Act to read:

11.2 The following Declaratory Act was adopted by the 1989 General Assembly and ordered inserted in the Book of Forms (A&P 1981, p. 90; A&P 1989, p. 271, 65) and was revised through an additional Declaratory Act adopted by the 2021 General Assembly: By virtue of their ordination vows, all ministers and elders are obliged to exercise full ministry including, among other things, active participation in the ordination of candidates to the eldership and to the ministry of Word and Sacraments. The one exception is that ministers and elders are granted

liberty of conscience and action in active participation in the ordination, induction and installation of candidates to the eldership and to the ministry of Word and Sacraments who are LGBTQI persons (married or single). (Remit C, 2019 – A&P 2019, p. 5) Though presbyteries have no authority to grant permission to disobey church law and doctrine, yet they are enjoined to deal with cases of conscience on any question with pastoral care and understanding for the parties involved, with concern and sensitivity for the peace and unity of the whole church.