

General Synod 2022

Standing Committee Report

Proposer: Canon Ian Berry

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Archbishop,

This report of the Standing Committee is the first of its current triennium as it carries on the work of General Synod and acts on its decisions between sessions. The Committee draws its membership from every diocese within the Church of Ireland and brings together people some of whom know or know of each other, some of whom have known each other for years, and others who have never met until they were elected. As such it brings together a diversity of knowledge and opinions which help to inform the discussions and decisions which are made.

The report begins on page 163 of the Book of Reports. It is a long report which covers the work of the committee as well as the work of many commissions, groups, boards and sub-committees which operate under the remit of the Standing Committee. There are parts of the report that we might skip over or just scan as we maybe first go to those aspects of the work and ministry of the Church which involve or interest us most. But in the parts that we might only read as we work through the report again there is a lot of good and vital work that is done for an in the name of the Church and we should be thankful for all who give of their time and energy.

On page 193, Appendix D, there is the report of the Board for Ministry with Children and Families. This Board is establishing its role within the life of the Church. Over the past couple of months the information on the Board's Facebook page has been particularly helpful and thought provoking as we moved through Lent and now into the Easter season.

On page 231, Appendix K, there is the report of the Working Group on Pioneer Ministry. This has been a topic for discussion and exploration for the last 10 years, pages 234 and 235 give a short history of this work. It is a report which gives consideration to, and further clarity around many of the questions we might ask about this form of ministry and its development as part of the mission of the Church. There is reflection on the experience of some of our sister Churches and what we can learn from their experiences as this work is tailored to Irish and Northern Irish contexts. There are examples of some of the places and parishes where this kind of ministry is currently happening which show how it can and does work. The report does clearly show the need for this kind of ministry in a variety of parochial and non-parochial situations. Reading it, you may have found yourself thinking of places and opportunities for this work to happen.

These are but two examples of the work of the Church covered in this report which represent many hours of consideration and work and prayer. We have for this next part of Synod an opportunity to hear about and discuss the issues in the report. Archbishop, I propose the adoption of the report of the Standing Committee.