

11. 3Generate 2017 – Methodist Children and Youth Assembly

Contact name and details	Michael Pryke Youth President youthpresident@methodistchurch.org.uk
Action required	Decision
Resolutions	<p>11/1. The Conference receives the Report.</p> <p>11/2. a) The Conference directs churches, Circuits and Districts actively to engage in a 'Year of Testimony' for the connexional year 2019/2020. b) The Conference directs the Methodist Council to consider how it can support the 'Year of Testimony' during the connexional year of 2019/2020.</p> <p>11/3. a) The Conference urges each Local Church to meet with their local MP or equivalent to build a relationship and explore concerns, and directs the Council to provide resources to support this. b) The Conference challenges every District to commit to one creative action to challenge a particular issue of injustice and to share this with the wider Connexion.</p>

Summary of content

Subject and aims	A summary of 3Generate 2017 – The Methodist Children and Youth Assembly.
Main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance and representation of 3Generate • Overview of the event • Result of elections held at 3Generate • Hearing the voice of young people • Resolutions set before the Conference

Change

1. The Methodist Children and Youth Assembly, 3Generate, is both an engagement process and an event for children and young people aged 8-23. Since 2010, the 3Generate event has grown significantly and as a result undergone substantial change. The most notable change, aside from the increase in numbers attending, this year was the invitation to leaders to attend *in loco parentis* with their groups. Provision was made in many Districts to enable those without formal groups to become part of a more established group. The event moved to a different venue; Pontins in Southport.

Membership

2. In total 943 delegates attended the 2017 event supported by 138 volunteers, 32 staff (of whom 27 were members of the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network), 9 ONE Programme Participants (OPPs) and 10 Elected Youth Representatives. Adding group leaders to this number resulted in the total number of people being on site at 1,234, making this the largest 3Generate in its history.

#WonderfullyProphetic

3. This year's theme was 'wonderfully prophetic'. This theme enabled the programme to focus on how children and young people can use their voice and lives to be agents of change.

Overview of the programme

4. With the move into a new venue, 3Generate was able to change and expand. To this end it was decided to use a venue-based system instead of dividing the assembly into age-specific areas for the majority of the event. Most sessions were suitable for all ages but with some sessions tailored to specific age groups.
5. One exception to this way of programming was Generate Young Adults. This was developed specifically for those between the ages of 18-23, although those in this age bracket could still be part of the rest of the programme across the site. Sessions included: discussions around authentic online communities, a jazz café, creative worship, prayers and sessions looking at their next steps in life. Throughout the event the 18-23s consistently expressed a desire to explore more deeply issues of mental health, in particular how the Church could engage in the issue and how best to help and support people.
6. There were 8 venues across the site. An overview of what took place in each venue is below.
 - 6.1. Creative Venue In this venue, children and young people had the opportunity to express themselves creatively. Activities involved making jewellery, painting stones, small canvases and t-shirts and Christmas decorations. As well as that, a digital graffiti wall captured the thoughts of the children and young people. In this venue, they were given free rein to express creatively issues and ideas. Many things were discussed including the desire for Methodist venues to be environmentally friendly and a recognition that there is sometimes a huge age gap between younger and older generations in churches. These creative expressions were captured in various ways. For example participants created a giant cross made out of the recycled containers that their food was delivered in during the weekend, demonstrating how recycling has been a key issue for 3Generate for a number of years. Continuing this theme every delegate was given a water bottle made out of recycled materials, this was presented on the Sunday service to remind children and young people to be a prophetic voice and to stand up for things they care about, in this case to use fewer plastic bottles.

6.2. Engage Venue This was the biggest venue in size where several musical artists performed: Vassie, Urban Praise Project and a Bluecoats show was held there on the Saturday night. During the day TED Talks were held with the titles 'One church, one world, eating monkey for Jesus', 'President Trump – why my cousin voted for him', 'Being a good neighbour when your neighbourhood has been destroyed: making sense of God in disasters' and 'You'll never know how amazing you are if you're always trying to fit in'. There were also workshops exploring mental health, sharing testimonies, and marriage and relationships. Some of the things discussed in the marriage and relationships workshop included a need for more conversations about healthy relationships and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender+ matters. There were differences in opinions regarding a re-definition of marriage. The desire to talk more about our faith stories was expressed in the sharing testimonies workshop.

6.3. Explore Venue This venue saw gospel worship, a comedy workshop, a drama group and Messy Science. During the Messy Science session, conversations centred around peace, how to work together as a church community, and worship styles that bring us closer to God. There was also an Open Space session where young people could bring any topic and discuss it. The majority were concerned about: 'mental health', 'should we follow the Bible word for word?', 'creating links with other churches around the world', 'is Sunday sacred?', 'the environment', 'why do we go to church?', 'do you feel your voice is heard?' During this session young people were asked to write on tablecloths their thoughts and opinions around these topics. They said: "We go to church to be heard, to worship God and to share God's word"; that the "Church is to lend its voice, show compassion to others and be just in how we treat other faiths" and young people also wanted their churches to "Lobby UK leaders to make social justice important."

6.4. Agents of Change Two marquees were erected just outside the main venue, in which workshops were facilitated by the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) and All We Can with contributions from Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) and Action for Children. Within this venue there were various workshops held as well as a rolling programme that included a re-creation of a Zimbabwean village where children and young people were invited to sit and think about what it would be like to live in this situation and offer prayers for those who do. There was also a giant inflatable globe where young people could place sticky notes on to countries and situations they wanted to pray for. Children and young people could also vote for the issues that they would like JPIT to work on. Terrorism was the topic which received the most votes. There was a late-night chat show and a silent disco. Young people also pledged to do one of 100 things to change the world, the most popular of these were to pray for those in need, reading about justice in the Bible and to use fewer plastic bottles. In addition, origami peace cranes (these were originally made by a girl from Hiroshima who died from leukaemia due to the dropping of the atomic bomb) were made and sent to the Secretary of State for Defence as a way of supporting JPIT's campaign against nuclear weapons. They were also hung in the window of Methodist Church House following 3Generate.

6.5. Voice Venue Four '3:Voice' sessions were held in this venue throughout the day. A technique called World Café was used for these sessions as a means of hearing the voices of young people. This style involves people sitting around a table (set out to make it feel as though you are in a café) and conversing about a question relating to a particular subject while being facilitated by someone, after about 15 minutes people changed tables and discussed a different question, which also related to the subject. The facilitator noted down everything said and the children and young people were also encouraged to write on the tablecloths.

The comments from the children and young people were captured by 4 large graphic recordings which can be viewed at www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/3generate/agents-of-change/manifestos-and-resources/.

The topics discussed in these sessions were:

- **Minding the Gap:** How can we create peace in today's world? Within this session young people expressed their desire for people to be nicer towards each other and wanted to tell the grown-ups to stop arguing in church. They also wanted to be valued, supported and to seek: inner (personal) peace, community peace, church peace and world peace and also to have dialogue and promote understanding around this.
- **Good Neighbours:** Is it possible to love others and ourselves? This session had several crossover points with the session about peace, as young people wanted everyone not to be mean to others even if people were mean to them. Several suggestions as what to do around this were suggested, such as adults helping young people and giving them a role. They also wanted to value 'all' their neighbours especially the homeless and immigrants. Finally, young people suggested that the Church needs to bring positive good news stories to the world as a way to counteract negativity.
- **Reinventing Church:** What would the perfect church look like? This session was the largest in terms of numbers showing how important this topic is to young people. Young people wanted to be treated as equals irrespective of their age and to be given responsibilities and opportunities within church services. They were also keen to see different styles of services as well as better (more modern) equipment.
- **Thriving Today:** What will help us, and our faith, to grow when times are difficult? In this session children and young people brought up how much they valued the range of views and beliefs expressed in the Church. They also valued the amount of support given to them and praying with others. To develop this further young people asked to be equipped to share faith and answer difficult questions, they wanted to try things and be allowed to make mistakes and they wanted to both share and hear faith stories about how they and others struggled.

6.6. Still Space Venue: This provided a gentler, more contemplative, alternative to the other venues and activities. The programme included mindful movement, Bible meditation, and quieter, reflective worship. This venue provided the ideal place to host the 'Safe Haven' – a silent space for those who needed to take time out, which was particularly helpful for those with additional needs. One of the sessions held in this venue was called '3:Voice Creative' where children and young people were encouraged to write or draw on tablecloths expressing their views and opinions about church and other issues.

Elections

7. The following young people were elected as 3Generate representatives at the 2017 event:

Youth President 2018/2019	Jasmine Yeboah
Representatives to the Methodist Conference	Ruth Hall, Kira Barfoot and Liberty Dane
Representative to the Methodist Council	Roxanne Bromley
Representatives to the British Youth Council	Callum Bentley, Grace Burnett and Alysha Wilson
Ecumenical Representative	Jack Key

8. These youth representatives, along with the previously elected Gemma Curtis, Jasmine Roberts, Roxanne Bainbridge and Samuel Ebdon, combine to form the Youth President's Advisory Group (as set out in SO 250(9)).
9. The group meets three times a year to develop the work of hearing and representing the voice of children and young people in a variety of contexts. The 3Generate representatives also visit churches, and attend circuit and district events where possible.

Resolutions

10. The Youth President's Advisory Group met subsequent to 3Generate to process the material gathered at the event and with the help and advice of the Chair of Chairs formed this into the resolutions.
11. Children and young people of the Methodist Church feel strongly about the issue of justice and social action, therefore support from the Church in resourcing thinking and acting for justice is an essential part of our faith, our heritage and Our Calling. However, 3Generate feels that too few people engage with issues of justice in this country and around the world. To tackle this, 3Generate would like to challenge the Methodist Church to work for justice inter-generationally. Firstly, they would like to challenge every church to get to know their MP so that they can raise issues of justice with her or him. Secondly, 3Generate challenges every district to show their passion for justice through committing to take a single action to challenge injustice – for example bringing people who work in foodbanks together to discuss the End Hunger campaign or dedicating a synod to exploring an issue of justice – and sharing the good news stories with others around the Connexion.
12. Another area that 3Generate feels strongly about is that testimony should play a greater role in the life of the whole Church. In this regard, 3Generate members recognise how important it is for all Christians to speak of our faith, to talk of God and to share stories as a means of deepening our faith and sharing it with others.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

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