

## 20. 3Generate 2022 – Methodist Children and Youth Assembly

<b>Contact name and details</b>	Mr James Carver, Methodist Youth President 2022/2023 youthpresident@methodistchurch.org.uk
<b>Action Required</b>	For Decision
<b>Resolutions</b>	<p>20/1. The Conference receives the Report.</p> <p>20/2. The Conference calls on all Methodists actively to engage in conversation with children and young people about faith and life.</p> <p>20/3. The Conference encourages all Methodist people, as they seek to live a Methodist Way of Life, to build their confidence in speaking with children and young people about faith and life and recommends to them the first module of the Youth Ministry Essentials training course as a way to develop their skills in this area.</p> <p>20/4. The Conference encourages churches, Circuits, and Districts to raise awareness of and actively find ways to resource and support children and young people in attending Christian youth events in addition to 3Generate.</p> <p>20/5. The Conference further encourages every Circuit to engage in ongoing conversation with their District Ambassador in respect of the support given to children and young people in attending Christian youth events in addition to 3Generate.</p>

### **Summary of Content and Impact**

<b>Subject and Aims</b>	<p>This report provides a detailed overview of the Methodist Children and Youth Assembly, 3Generate 2022. Its aims are to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce the Conference to 3Generate 2022</li> <li>• Make the Conference aware of election results</li> <li>• Bring to the Conference's attention the topics that are important to the children and young people of the Methodist Church</li> <li>• Present to the Conference resolutions that aim to break barriers which impact children and young people within the Church</li> </ul>
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<b>Main Points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and young people want an active relationship with adults within the church that enables them to have open conversations their faith and life.</li> <li>• Children and young people want more opportunities to meet with each other.</li> <li>• Children and young people want recognition as active disciples in the life of the Church with opportunities to explore their faith on a deeper level.</li> </ul>
<b>Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)</b>	Report 10 to the 2022 Conference: <i>3Generate 2021 – Methodist Children and Youth Assembly</i>
<b>Consultations</b>	Children and young people who attended 3Generate 2022 Elected Youth Representatives
<b>Impact</b>	<p>It is foreseen that the resolutions contained within this report shall have the following impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial and resource cost on Churches, Circuits, and Districts linked to Resolution 4.</li> <li>• Increased workload for District Ambassadors linked to Resolution 5.</li> <li>• A time commitment from Methodist members linked to Resolutions 2, 4, and 5.</li> </ul>

*'I am young in years and you are aged; therefore I was timid and afraid to declare my opinion to you. I said, "Let days speak, and many years teach wisdom." But truly it is the spirit in a mortal, the breath of the Almighty, that makes for understanding. It is not the old that are wise, nor the aged that understand what is right*

**Job 32:6b-9 (NRSVA)**

### Introduction

3Generate 2022 was bigger, better, and louder than ever before with 1200 children and young people, 456 group leaders, and 252 volunteers joining together at the NEC in Birmingham to share in view, in creativity, and in communion with God. This is the report of that weekend and over the next few pages, we will introduce you to the event itself,

report the results of elections held, bring to your attention the topics that are important to children and young people, and present resolutions that aim to break barriers which impact children and young people within the Church.

### **Tune In**

This year, 3Generate aimed to encourage children and young people to 'Tune in to God, the World and Each Other' as a way of guiding them towards being able to discern God's plans.

This was assisted by actions which were designed to prompt those attending to a) tune into God, the world, and each other, b) listen to what God is saying to them, and c) discern what actions need to be taken for themselves, their local church, or the Connexion.



This process was also woven throughout the event with the help of venues that were each designed to help children and young people engage in a way that best suited them. This process was woven throughout the event and in every venue. The venues in the 3Generate Town included:

### **The Arena**

Hosting a range of amazing contributors such as DJ Genesis, A-Star, the National Methodist Youth Brass Band, and Pan Nation, the Arena was one of 3Generate's main worship spaces.

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### **The Arts Centre**

Understanding that there are multiple ways to identify God's work within the world, the Arts Centre was a place where the children and young people had an opportunity create beautiful pieces of art that depicted what God means to them.

Also included in the Arts Centre were paintings from the Methodist Modern Art Collection; specifically: Feeding of Five Thousand by Eularia Clark, Christ's Entry Into Jerusalem by Norman Adams, Nativity Polyptych by Francis Hoyland, Pentecost by John Brokenshire, The Washing of the Feet by Ghislaine Howard, and Dalit Madonna by Jyoti Sahi. The aim of the Methodist Modern Art Collection is to encourage people to enter into conversations about God in Christ in the contemporary world, and at 3Generate it enabled the children and young people to connect to God on an emotional and thought-provoking level.

### **The Chapel**

The Chapel was the spiritual epicentre of 3Generate with various conversations taking place that covered areas of faith, LGBT+ inclusion in the church, politics, neurodiverse conditions, and science. The venue also hosted numerous prayer and worship sessions such as Unplanned and Unplugged; spirit-led worship sessions which were conducted without a structure.

One of the conversations, hosted by A-Star, helped the Assembly to understand the effects of sickle cell disease; an inherited medical condition that affects the blood and can often cause infections and anaemia.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Great Outdoors**

The Great Outdoors was God's wonderful outside world, inside. Made up of trees, leaves, rocks, and wood, the venue helped the children and young people to explore the beauty that God created. The area also had a climbing wall, an inflatable 'leap of faith' slide, woodcraft activities, and a planetarium to inspire and help the children and young people to recognise God's presence wherever they may be.

### **The Health and Wellbeing Centre**

A common discussion in the Church is how we see God, the Health and Wellbeing Centre inverted this and helped the children and young people to understand how God sees

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1 <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sickle-cell-disease/>

them. Though guided meditation, sessions with therapy dogs, and reflective prayers, the children and young people discovered how much God loves and cares for them, helping them to understand God's plan for them.

### **The Park**

The Methodist Church believes that a way in which we can discern God's plan is through conversations with others. The Park was a place for the children and young people to do this. The venue, which was run in partnership with Cliff College and its students, also acted a place of worship with a late night communion taking place and multiple sessions for worship music and group prayer. For the adventurous participants there was also early morning sports, which included running several laps around the site.

On Saturday, the Park hosted the best contributors of the whole weekend at '3Gen's Got Talent'; a youth-led talent show filled with songs, magic tricks, jokes, and many more acts which depicted the diversity of the Church and showcased the different skills God enables everyone to have.

### **The Hope and Anchor**

The Hope and Anchor was the Ice Cream and Milkshake café of 3Generate. Hosted by the Evangelism and Growth team, children and young people could go into this venue to discuss deep theological questions they had about God, take a break over some board games, or take part in a quiz. At the end of the day, this venue also acted as a base for our 18-25 volunteer stream to get together and chat about topics close to them.

### **The Rec**

A sports focused venue, the Rec was a space where children and young people could discover spirituality and faith through sports, using these activities to engage with God and enable faith conversations.

### **The Sensory Space**

At 3Generate, we are aware that some of our venues are busy. To help participants who became overstimulated, or just want to escape the crowds for a bit, the Sensory Space was an area away from other venues that allowed people to have time out when they needed it. The venue was created with help from Growing Hope<sup>2</sup> and had a range of

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<sup>2</sup> <https://growinghope.org.uk/>

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provisions including sensory toys, trampolines, Lego, and ear defenders. Full information on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion at 3Generate is featured later in this report.

On the Sunday, the Sensory Space played host to an in-person meeting of Let's Talk About Disability, a Methodist initiative created and run by young people living with disability. As part of the session, the group hosted a discussion around what it is like to be a young person living with disabilities in the church, with the aim of enabling future discussions and collaborative work to make the Church an inclusive space for all. Members of the Conference can read more about Let's Talk About Disability on the Methodist Church website.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Tech Hub**

If you entered the Tech Hub, you would have seen children and young people playing video games, wearing VR headsets and using Instagram; you would probably ask yourself what this has to do with faith. With the amazing help of Missional Generation,<sup>4</sup> the Tech Hub utilised this equipment and helped children and young people to engage with the Bible and learn about what mission looks like in a digital age. The venue was a shining example of how the Church, and expressions of faith, can exist in a technology-dominated world.

### **The Theatre Royal**

Utilising forms of poetry, dance, songs and other mediums, the Theatre Royal helped children and young people to understand that God is always around and can be seen through the performing arts as well as our Bibles.

### **The Town Hall**

For years, the children and young people of the Methodist Church have actively called out many social justice issues within and outside of the Church. The Town Hall gave participants a chance to expand their knowledge of politics and social action by teaching them how to make change happen in a variety of ways. The venue also hosted talks on how to set up charities, sessions on how to write to Members of Parliament, and discussions on how to tackle the climate crisis.

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3 <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/agents-of-change/lets-talk-about-disability/>

4 <https://www.missionalgen.co.uk/>

### **On The Margins**

On The Margins is a venue where we attempt, with the help of professionals, to highlight, understand and combat the different forms of oppression at work in the world. This year the venue focused on the topic of peace through the medium of artwork and conversations with Army Chaplains, Place for Hope, survivors of conflict, and protest groups. The venue engaged in active and informative dialogue with children and young people, enabling them to build their knowledge of ongoing situations between Ukraine and Russia, the ecological impact of war around the world, including the Rwandan conflict, and conversations on the difference between freedom of speech and hate speech.

We are thankful for all those who spoke to the children and young people, especially to our guests from Rwanda who shared their tough testimonies with us.

### **The Well**

Running alongside activities for children and young people, the Well was an area open to leaders who attended and who had a passion for learning more about getting children and young people involved in faith conversations and the life of the Church. This year, the Well hosted a variety of sessions on multiple topics which included youth empowerment, creating accessible material for children and young people, and what mission looks like in a digital age. Also, understanding the pressures that youth workers experience, The Well hosted break sessions where leaders could have refreshments and share tips between themselves.

### **4-7 Venue**

At 3Generate 2021, we trialled a brand new venue for 4-7 year olds to attend 3Generate and feed into the conversations. This year, the venue was back! On the Saturday, our youngest participants joined us again at 3Generate in their own unique venue where they could join in with up to two significant adults; such as parents, carers, grandparents, or others who were known well to them. Together, the group explored the different ways to tune in to God, discussed faith, and thought about the questions they had. The venue was a space for them to understand that they can meet with God through play, through craft, or during times of exploration. During their day together, they visited The Rec venue, posed questions to the President and Vice President of the Conference, and took part in a wealth of activities. It was a fun, active and enjoyable day with Godly Play stories, worship, prayer, and lots of conversations!

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### **The Town Square**

3Generate expanded this year, by creating a new 'Town Square'. This large space was available for anyone to come and socialise, talk as a group, and discover information about the multiple areas of work within the Methodist Church. In addition, on the Saturday, the 3Generate Youth Reps took over the space and ran a wide-array of unique activities aimed at being in dialogue with children and young people at the event. Over the day, participants could engage with The Continuum, which enabled them to share their views on different topics; the Social Justice Paperchains, where children and young people added their concern for the world to other people's concerns; a conversational ball pit where groups climbed in and discussed answers to questions; and complete online quizzes. They could also sit at the Bus Stop and discuss with volunteers their answers to the following questions:

"What commitment to God are you making?"

"What do you want to do about that?"

"What support would you need to achieve this?"

These sessions complemented the work of other venues, which also created unique spaces for dialogue with children and young people.

The Conference should be aware that these short descriptions do not do the venues as much justice as they deserve, and any member is invited to apply to attend 3Generate 2023 as a Group Leader or volunteer to experience 3Generate first hand.

### **Young Adults**

This year 3Generate offered individuals aged 18-25 the option to join a young adults' volunteer stream. This was an alternative option in conjunction to attending as participants if they so wished. At 3Generate 2022, an amazing team of 39 young adults gave up their time and helped out around site by managing venues, equipping sessions, and ensuring the event was safe for all who attended.

Also this year, a small group of young adults aged between 18-25 years old took part in an informal consultation on Young Adult Ministry. As part of the session, the attendees were asked for their ideas as to what they would like Young Adult ministry to look like, this will be fed into the ongoing development of Young Adult ministry. Some key themes that ran throughout the feedback were:

- Young adults want to have a connection with their home churches when living at university, and when they return home for the holidays.
- Young adults want to be encouraged to find a place in the church according to their needs, instead of the needs of the church, and without feeling tokenised.



### **Sustainability**

In line with the aim of the Methodist Church to become net zero by 2030, 3Generate 2022 worked hard to protect the environment with many initiatives which included using recycled festival tents for participants to stay in, sustainably sourced hoodies for all volunteers, and ensuring that none of our waste went to landfill sites.

### **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**

3Generate always seeks to embed diversity and inclusivity throughout and beyond the weekend. We are committed to equity, equality, respect and inclusion for all children, young people and adults.

As part of our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, we worked directly with group leaders in the run up to the event to ensure that the accommodation (tents, beds, showers etc) was exactly what each delegate needed in order for the event to be truly accessible. Furthermore, as part of their statutory training, all volunteers received instruction on safeguarding, tackling unconscious bias, and accessibility.

This year, we also had guests from our international partners including some from the Methodist Church in Ireland who kindly helped to lead worship and prayer sessions, and young people from the Evangelical Church of Spain (Iglesia Evangelica Espanola) who fed back that they enjoyed the music at the worship sessions and loved the way in which 3Generate hears the voices of children and young people.

### **Additional needs**

3Generate takes its responsibility to those with additional needs very seriously. For those who needed a little extra help fully to participate in 3Generate, a range of support was available including: the Sensory Space where calmer, more relaxed sessions took place, resources such as ear defenders and fidget toys being available in each of the venues around town, and BSL interpreters during worship. There were also new sessions this year for siblings of those with additional needs to discuss the pressures of being a young carer. Additionally, the provision of a dedicated quiet space for mealtimes was introduced. Each year, 3Generate looks at how everyone can enjoy the event, have their voice heard, and tune in to God as best possible; information on our review process is available in the next section.

### **Our process for growing and developing**

As part of our ongoing development process, we are constantly seeking to refine and grow 3Generate as an event as there is always more to learn. So that the event is

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consistently evolving, we have a comprehensive, year-round process of engagement and participation, which starts with the weekend itself, where we listen to onsite feedback from children, young people, leaders, and volunteers. Also, after the weekend we send out feedback forms to both group leaders and members of the delivery team. Some feedback from this year included:

“It was very impactful for me to be in a church environment as a queer person and not have it be an issue. Also enjoyed meeting other trans young people on the delivery team.”

“I chatted to a couple of teenage lads who told me the best thing about 3Generate wasn't the amazing activities; it was the conversations about faith they were able to have. 3Gen is a safe space to have those conversations”

“As an older volunteer I'm usually around people of my own age, but it was wonderful to be surrounded by so many delightful young people. I wore my hoodie to a church council meeting to demonstrate to the members, and I also took some of the programmes.”

“[3Generate] Inspired leaders to think about use of different activities, interesting to hear that some of them missed traditional worship music! Encouraged us to network and share resources as a circuit to build on work started at [3Generate]!”

“The young people felt challenged with the various of activities available. Overcoming fears of heights with the climbing wall. Participating in the escape van activity.”

“Seeing so many children and young people safely enjoying themselves and learning is inspiring. One young person was really taken by the Youth President speaking on stage because he has a stammer too. 3 Gen inspired myself and my group through the comradeship shown at the event. Giving time to volunteer and also meeting so many positive and friendly people. Realizing how exciting it can be to be a part of The Methodist Church. Realizing that with God all things are possible. Involving several new adults as group volunteers and seeing them being inspired and encouraged.”

“As mentioned, the young people brought their concerns back to the church in worship. It's possible that this has already affected the church's willingness to move in some directions. Slowly! 3Generate also helps to bond and enthuse our group which has an impact on the wider church.”

“3Gen always [energises] the church to support our young people in their faith and their way of worshipping and learning.”

As mentioned, as part of our ongoing development process, we review all feedback, safeguarding debriefs, operational reviews, and the open dialogue from children and

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young people. This is then fed back into the development and planning process for the next year. This process is long but in summary, it consists of the following:

<b>Rough Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>
Immediately after 3Generate	Feedback Gathered	Feedback is gathered from Youth Groups and Volunteers who attended 3Generate
November – January	Programme Sprint 1	A time for the Programme team to review the feedback and make suggestions on how to evolve the event for the proceeding year.
January – February	Influencers Day	This is a day where groups of children and young people gather, are presented with the ideas from the Programme Sprint, and they inform us which ideas they think are wanted and which would not appeal.
February – March	Programme Sprint 2	A place where the Programme Team gathers again, reviews the feedback from the Influencer Day, and formulates plans around the pieces of feedback. Venue Leads then go to the satellite groups who work on how to implement this in each venue.
May – July	Programme Sprint 3	A place where the Programme Team gathers for a final time and the Venue Leads present their plans; these are then typed up and become the programme.

### **Elections**

In accordance with Standing Orders 250(10), 250(11), and 250(12) 3Generate is required each year to elect representatives to act as the Methodist Youth President, Representatives to the Methodist Conference, and Representatives to the Methodist Council. However, in recent years, the representative group has expanded to include Global Church Representatives, individuals elected to interact and share testimony with our global partners, Agents of Change Representatives, individuals elected to represent the youth voice on social justice issues, and a Digital Representative, an individual elected to assist with boosting the digital profile and presence of the representative team and share news of what the various representatives are doing. At 3Generate 2022, the following individuals were elected:

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Youth President 2023/2024	Thomas Hart
Methodist Conference Representative	Iraj Irfan Erin Campbell Owen Wilkins
Methodist Council Representative	Matt Hayes
Agents of Change Representative	Daniel Onyett Afon Harland Alex Day Ailish Dooley
Global Church Representative	Luca Barwick Plant
Digital Representative	Joseph Zaccaria

These individuals will join Verity Wild (Methodist Council Representative), Eleanor Dixon (Methodist Council Representative), and Eli Atif (Global Church Representative) as part of the Youth Representatives Team of the Methodist Church in Britain and the Youth President Advisory Group.

We share our thanks to the 3Generate Youth Representatives who served from January 2022 to January 2023; Martha Rand (Methodist Conference Representative), Charlotte Hambly (Methodist Council Representative), Isabel Barlow (Ecumenical Representative), James Jenkins (Ecumenical Representative), Hope Wild (Agents of Change Representative), Liddy Buswell (Global Church Representative), and Daud Shaukat (Digital Representative).

### **What are children and young people talking about?**

#### **Children and young people want more opportunities to meet with each other.**

The Methodist Church has a history of connexionalism that children and young people want to be a part of; this was a clear statement from the Youth Assembly. However, despite youth gatherings, home groups, synods, and more being available, it was identified that these may not always be available to children and young people due to factors including timings, locations, awareness, and cost. This is important to acknowledge because being able to attend these events in addition to 3Generate allows for children and young people to: a) meet with each other, b) share wisdom across the generations, c) share developmental information with their Local Churches, and d) enable them to have a wider understanding of the Methodist Church in Great Britain. This can also be crucial for the young person's interpersonal development and identity within

the church, especially in a denomination where churches are dispersed and local youth congregations are on the decline.

The elected representatives of 3Generate are aware of, and commend, the multiple youth gatherings taking place across Britain which, in addition to 3Generate, include Flourish (organised by Yorkshire North and East District), Amplify (organised by Birmingham District), Momentwm (organised by Wales Synod Cymru), and 8:23 (organised by the Nottingham and Derby District). There are also multiple opportunities for children and young people to share their wisdom in places such as the Methodist Conference<sup>5</sup> or their local Church Council. However, as identified earlier there are barriers to children and young people being able to attend these meetings and events that need to be addressed on a local level.

We understand that with the ongoing cost of living crisis, it can be difficult for churches, circuits, or districts to financially support everyone, but we implore you to invest in the present and future of the church by supporting the development of children and young people in whatever way is available. We therefore ask churches, circuits, and districts to assist their children and young people by a) identifying ways in which they are able to attend events in addition to 3Generate, and b) making provisions available to enable children and young people to engage with such opportunities.

### **Children and young people want an active relationship with adults within the church that enables them to have open conversations their faith and life.**

A massive message from 3Generate was the children and young people calling out for help. Not help from the Youth Assembly, but help from their home churches. The Methodist Church has the belief that we encounter and learn more about the magnificent nature of God through conversation with others, a belief that was reinforced in *Our Calling* (2000) which states “The Church exists to help people to grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care”. However, conversations at 3Generate 2022 indicated that children and young people often feel excluded or ill equipped to participate in these conversations due to older members of the church not engaging in conversation about faith and life with them. This is concerning because evidence suggests that retention of young people within the church is increased when they have a deeper understanding of faith and God (Barna Group, 2023<sup>6</sup>).

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5 Being eligible to vote on internal matters relating to the Methodist Church but ineligible to vote on trustee matters below the age of 18.

6 Barna Group, (2023). Over Half of Gen Z Teens Feel Motivated To Learn More About Jesus. *Millennials and Generations* [online], 01 February. Available at: <https://www.barna.com/research/teens-and-jesus/>

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At 3Generate and other youth gatherings across the Connexion, children and young people are opened up to many theological discussions, across multiple topics such as understanding war as Christians, how science and religion can co-exist, and what our identities tell us about faith. However, based on our conversations, this support is not extended within home churches; a place where the learning needs to be encouraged.

We acknowledge that this may not be the case for all churches, however, in a world where everything is high speed, cancel culture is rife, and communication styles are constantly changing, it can be unnerving for adults to enter into dialogue with children and young people out of fear that one wrong word could land them in trouble. Therefore, we would like to commend to you session one of the Youth Ministry Essentials course, a free resource which equips people with the skills and confidence needed to effectively enter into a two-way dialogue with children and young people. The course is planned to launch in June, so should be available via The Well learning hub on the Methodist website at the time of the Conference.

### **\*\*\*RESOLUTIONS**

**The children and youth assembly of the Methodist Church present the following resolutions on behalf of the children and young people of the Methodist Church:**

- 20/1. The Conference receives the Report.**
- 20/2. The Conference calls on all Methodists actively to engage in conversation with children and young people about faith and life.**
- 20/3. The Conference encourages all Methodist people, as they seek to live a Methodist Way of Life, to build their confidence in speaking with children and young people about faith and life and recommends to them the first module of the Youth Ministry Essentials training course as a way to develop their skills in this area.**
- 20/4. The Conference encourages churches, Circuits, and Districts to raise awareness of and actively find ways to resource and support children and young people in attending Christian youth events in addition to 3Generate.**
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