

Church of Scotland's General Assembly is online today

The Church of Scotland is holding its annual General Assembly online this weekend.

You can watch live [here](#).

More than 730 commissioners are taking part in the first virtual event to discuss urgent issues and draft official Church policy.

During the pandemic, more and more churches have held their own services online. In May this year when the new Moderator Rt Rev Martin Fair was installed, the assembly itself was cancelled due to the pandemic.



Saturday 16 May 2020: Unique service of installation for the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 2020-21. The annual event was cancelled due to the COVID-19 health crisis. Rev Dr Martin Fair, pictured, was officially installed as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland succeeding Rt Rev Colin Sinclair as the Kirk's ambassador at home and abroad during the service at the General Assembly Hall, The Mound, Edinburgh. Photo Andrew O'Brien

Now with strict social distancing and hygiene measures will allow a few representatives from the church's committees and councils to appear from the Assembly Hall on the Mound. There is a skeleton technical crew and commissioners, ministers, elders and deacons are there to discuss church business and then vote online.

HM The Queen is not represented by a Lord High Commissioner this year, but she has written to the General Assembly saying that she praised Church of Scotland members for the “commendable” way in which they have responded to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In common with business and all organisations in the UK the church is affected financially by Covid-19.

A spokesman for the Church of Scotland said: “The COVID-19 health crisis has affected income streams for all charities and the Church of Scotland is no exception.

“With church buildings closed over the last six months and activities curtailed, there is the potential for reductions in contributions from our congregations as well as in our trading activities and investment income which we rely on to carry out our vital work.

“To respond to the financial challenge facing us, a range of mitigating actions have been taken to maintain the income levels as far as possible, reduce our costs and accelerate our plans for structural reform.”

Commissioners will be asked to back calls to develop a strategy for the Church to transition both locally and nationally to net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

They will be asked to reaffirm that racism is a sin, declare that Black Lives Matter and report to a future Assembly on the issue of racial justice and the legacy of slavery and the Church of Scotland.