

## 10. 3Generate 2021 – Methodist Children and Youth Assembly

<b>Contact name and details</b>	Mr Daud Irfan, Methodist Youth President 2021/2022 youthpresident@methodistchurch.org.uk
<b>Resolutions</b>	<p>10/1. The Conference receives the Report.</p> <p>10/2. The Conference encourages Local Preachers' Meetings and Circuit Leadership Teams to explore and promote a variety of worship styles which involve praying together, inviting open discussions about faith, and celebrate intergenerational learning.</p> <p>10/3. The Conference encourages churches to address children and young people's passion for growing a deeper faith by exploring the question, "how can we make our Church a more praying Church?" by adding this to the agenda of all Church Council meetings before the 2023/2024 connexional year.</p> <p>10/4. The Conference urges circuit staff teams to review how young people under the age of 23 might be more intentionally and actively supported to consider their calling and be guided onto local preaching/worship leading or other relevant courses.</p>

### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aims</b>	A summary of 3Generate 2021 – The Methodist Children and Youth Assembly.
<b>Main Points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance and representation at 3Generate</li> <li>• District Ambassadors</li> <li>• An overview of the event</li> <li>• Covenants</li> <li>• Feedback</li> <li>• Result of elections for the positions of Youth President and Youth Representatives</li> <li>• Resolutions set before the Conference</li> </ul>

#### 1. **Attendance and Representation at 3Generate**

In total across the weekend of 29-31 October 2021, 3Generate was attended by 65 groups made up of 750 children and young people who were supported by 250 group leaders, all of whom came from 21 Methodist districts. These numbers were achieved during an incredibly difficult time of uncertainty, in an extraordinary year, coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to the event, work was undertaken to build people's confidence in signing up for and attending the weekend, encouraging groups to gather together in large numbers and encouraging volunteers to participate. For the first time ever, our intergenerational model was further expanded through the introduction of a new one-day programme, which was run for 4 to 7 year olds who attended with parents or guardians.

#### 2. **District Ambassadors**

As recommended by the 2020 Conference, District Ambassadors were to be nominated by District Chairs (Resolution 53/11 DR 6/14/1). There are currently (at the time of writing) 17 District Ambassadors across 16 Districts, who are actively working alongside the Connexional

Team to enable Local Churches to make time and space to inspire children and young people to pray, listen, notice, and explore in peer and all-age settings (as the whole Body of Christ) how God wants them to be active disciples in the world. District Ambassadors continue to engage in dialogue in their own Districts, at all levels, to advocate for children and young people with support from the Connexional Team.

### 3. **An overview of the event**

3Generate, the Methodist Children and Youth Assembly, aims to create an inclusive and diverse space for the prophetic voice of children and young people to emerge and be heard. It enables them to speak courageously, and listen to God and each other. Through the 3Generate process, children and young people are equipped to become participants in advocacy, change and growth and have an impact in their local Methodist communities. 3Generate calls the Church to listen to, and be in relationship and dialogue with and amongst, children and young people, so that change can happen together as a community.

In particular, 3Generate 2021 was the first year of creating covenants at 3Generate, which enabled children and young people to dive deeper into their prophetic voices through their own individual covenants (see below for more).

In a new location, for the first time ever, we had three halls within the National Exhibition Centre (NEC), Birmingham, with 15 venues in one hall. The remaining two halls (called “The Village”) were used for tents where individuals and groups stayed overnight.

#### **Venues**

For 3Generate 2021, the NEC in Birmingham was set up as a town, to give the attendees an almost home-like feeling through the set-up which was designed to familiarise all participants with specific venues. The venues at 3Generate 2021 including the following, most of which had rolling and inclusive programmes running throughout the weekend.

- **Arts Centre** – A place where children and young people could encounter God through visual arts, crafts and creative writing, via different mediums such as painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, photography, video, filmmaking, design, poetry, storytelling and crafts.
- **The Chapel** – A dedicated spiritual space all weekend with a focus on hearing from God and sensing God’s vision with opportunities for young people to find space to listen to God, but also a space to ask questions about faith and to seek wisdom and discernment.
- **Great Outdoors** – An active space to explore faith and positive change with God’s help, through sports and relaxation. In this venue, we hoped to celebrate creation, nature, and the marvels of the universe where we feel close to the awesomeness of the creator.
- **Health and Wellbeing Centre** – A place for holistic health and wellbeing, which creatively engaged those coming into the space with activities, discussions, interactive art and TED talks/hackathons on a wide variety of relevant health and wellbeing topics.
- **The Park** – This green space aimed to inspire a feeling of being outdoors whilst in the midst of a bustling town. It was a place for connecting with others, hanging out, relaxing, being sociable, engaging with music, collective worship and discussion around the bandstand and/or speakers corner.

- **On The Margins** – A place where children and young people were able to explore issues of social justice and how God works with and through those who feel marginalised or isolated, or frustrated by inequality they see or experience in Church and society.
- **Theatre Royal and 3Gen Arena** – These venues were a place where children and young people could encounter God through creativity and performance arts. Through mediums such as music, song, dance, spoken word and drama, hoping to give expression to faith and issues of importance to them. Participants were able to identify and use their gifts, skills and talents to express themselves, celebrating the place of the arts in growing connection with God and each other.
- **Town Hall** – The centre of the Town, this forum offered a space for leaders and decision makers of the Methodist Church at Church, Circuit, District and connexional levels to meet with those in the 3Generate Town and be in debate, discussion and solution together to challenge and learn from one another.
- **The Wilderness** – A space where children and young people could engage in issues such as when our faith is in turmoil, when we are wrestling with God, feelings of anger and lament, struggling to fit in with mainstream Church, exploring what it means to simply 'trudge along with God', seeking God in the wilderness.
- **Marketplace** – Stalls from organisations and contributors at 3Generate. Located beside the park, this was effectively the town square. Both spaces flowed into one another, much like in a town centre – allowing one to pop into the park for a stroll. The market place hosted stalls from organisations and contributors at 3Generate
- **The Well** – A venue for leaders who attended 3Generate with their children and young people. This was a space for leaders to relax and have some time out, whilst also providing the opportunity for them to be supported and resourced and, in particular, to be informed about the principles of 3Gen so that they can continue the work after the event.

### **3Generate 2021 theme: In Tune**

Each year the 3Generate weekend has a theme which venues and activities are shaped around. The theme for 3Generate 2021 was 'In Tune'. Through this theme, 3Generate focused on how children and young people can connect with God and listen to God's voice in our everyday lives. Children and young people were also encouraged to go away from 3Generate to look out for God in their everyday lives as well. Posters and images around the 3Generate venues were placed in key locations to keep reminding participants of the theme. All attendees were also given a journal in which they can note down how God speaks to them and where or in what way they see God. The journal was a means to help people notice and keep a record of when God spoke to them or they spoke to God. The theme 'In Tune' was promoted across the assembly in many ways including prayer, music, in the Bible, in worship, in nature and in conversation. A key part of the theme of being 'In Tune' was responding through covenants and how being 'In Tune' with the voice of God can further enable us to move into a deeper commitment with God.

#### **4. Covenants**

At 3Generate 2021, we shifted from a 3Generate manifesto towards Covenant. This shift was made to involve children and young people in the Methodist Church on a more personal level and further connect with and engage with a Methodist Way of Life, in the similar sense of how local congregations celebrate all that God has done for us through an annual Covenant Service. Through the shift from manifesto towards covenant, we enabled children and young

people to express their passion of exploring their own spiritual experiences, seeking answers and speaking out. The idea behind creating individual covenants rather than a collective manifesto was to create a sense of personal accountability and agency, as children and young people at 3Generate had the opportunity to build on the foundations of their own personal relationship with God in their everyday life.

Whilst the covenants create a sense of personal accountability and agency, it is hoped that churches, Circuits, and Districts will engage with their children and young people to support them in living out their covenants in any way possible. This can be done through guidance, support and encouragement from church members and any persons who are willing/able to connect with the Methodist youth in their churches.

Children and young people actively and with a strong passion and desire, across the Methodist Church, seek to become the beacons of change themselves, rather than asking for change. The shift to covenants was one way in which they were supported to have a sense of personal responsibility. All those in attendance were given the opportunity during Sunday morning worship to make their own individual covenants with God.

Across the weekend, teaching on covenant was delivered alongside the theme of 'In Tune'. Children and young people were encouraged to tune in to God's voice and where they see God at work in their own lives or where they believe they can enable their faith to grow with God. Attendees were also reflecting over the weekend on an individual covenant that they would like to make between themselves and God. There were many key themes which stood out in the covenants and they included; looking after the environment, working more closely with youth groups, praying more, getting involved in district events and opportunities, and continuing to serve God. Below are some of the covenants that were made by individuals at 3Generate 2021.

- *'I promise to treat others the way I want to be treated'*
- *'Being in tune with God always'*
- *'To speak out about injustice I see'*
- *'To keep on having those difficult conversations at church'*
- *'To pray more for others'*
- *'To look after the Earth'*
- *'Continue to serve God all my life'*
- *'To get more involved in the young adult's team at my church'*
- *'Help People'*
- *'I promise to pray daily to show how I praise God'*

## 5. **Feedback**

After coming back to 3Generate after two years' hiatus, there was a sense of excitement at the event. The event enabled participants to fellowship together, share their experiences together, raise their concerns, share their opinions and gather as a part of the Methodist Church to get to know one another. There were many positive responses shared during and after 3Generate 2021, below are some of the feedback responses received after 3Generate from group leaders via an online survey.

- *'Being able to join together in one place after such a difficult period'* – This was a response that was echoed not only after 3Generate but also throughout the entirety of the weekend also. 3Generate offered Methodists from all across Great Britain the opportunity to be able to join together in worship and fellowship.
- *'The variety of activities that were on offer during the weekend'* – As previously mentioned in the report, all of the venues ran various sessions and workshops, offering a variation of activities for those in attendance to participate in.

- *‘Very inspiring for both young people and leaders to grow in Christ, sharing time with like- minded Christians’* – The age range of participants, leaders and volunteers showed the intergenerational integration that the Methodist Church has to offer.
- *‘Young people felt connected with the theme and were focused on the same topic in their next local gathering’* – Leading on from 3Generate 2021, many groups in attendance went back to their local circuits and shared their experiences in their home churches. These enabled church members on a more local and personal scale, to engage with the children and young people, through discussions of how they connected with God and what their Church could do to lead them in discipleship.
- *‘There was a lot of interest in the diversity of people attending’* – We worked very hard to increase our awareness of all types of diversity at the event. A number of key volunteers were specifically trained in areas of protected characteristics and sensitive matters.
- *‘They’ve grown in faith as a group together. I think they like the idea that they have (new) friends exploring faith with them’* – 3Generate is a place where children and young people can meet people of similar ages to them from all over the Connexion and this is a key part of 3Generate, that all participants can feel comfortable in a safe space, whilst getting to know one another during worship, fun and games, workshops, over food and everything else that 3Generate has to offer.

#### **6. Result of elections for the positions of Youth President and Youth Representatives**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>
Youth President 2022-23	James Carver
Youth Representatives – Conference	Iraj Irfan Martha Rand Afon Harland
Youth Representatives – Council	Eleanor Dixon
Youth Representatives – Ecumenical	James Jenkins
Youth Representatives – Agents of Change	Daniel Onyett Luca Barwick-Plant Hope Wild
Youth Representatives – Global Church	Elisha Atif
Youth Representatives – Digital	Daud Shaukat

The representatives will join Charlotte Hambly, Verity Wild, Isabel Barlow and Liddy Buswell as the Youth Representatives team. They will serve within the Youth President’s Advisory Group, under Standing Order 250(9) consisting of the Youth President designate, the ex-Youth President and those elected by the Methodist Children and Youth Assembly. As a group the Representatives, alongside the Youth President, will meet two times a year to further develop and support the work of 3Generate with children and young people, whilst attending church, circuit and district events in their capacity.

The Youth Representatives work in various different contexts under the aim of representing a youth voice across the Connexion locally, regionally and nationally. As a team, the Representatives attend various meetings throughout their tenure, promote key issues which young people are passionate about to the wider Church, help to plan 3Generate, and engage with our ecumenical partners among various other tasks. We have seen increased diversity in youth leadership through the Youth Representatives that are part of the current team and that has further highlighted the broad diversity which the Methodist Church has to offer in intergenerational aspects. As the most recent voting procedure took place solely online, there

was a significant increase in applicants for all Youth Representative roles. However, due to voting taking place online and not at 3Generate itself, this did show a decrease in voter turnout. Therefore, there is a need for further discernment on the best methods of voting for future years to ensure more children and young people cast votes during these elections.

#### **7. Resolutions set before the Conference**

The resolutions in this report have been produced by feedback from participants who were present at 3Generate 2021, as interpreted by the Youth President's Advisory Group and the Youth President. The resolutions have more specifically been influenced from the Covenants that were made at 3Generate by the children and young people, feedback from venues and from the placards produced within the On The Margins Venue.

In the development of these resolutions, conversations at 3Generate between the Youth President and Youth Representatives with participants were key to understanding what it is that children and young people want to see in their churches in order to grow in their faith and church life. Personal and collective prayer and worship have been a significant factor in terms of how children and young people want to move forward in their walk with God, so therefore, the resolutions set before the Conference in this report reflect the significance of prayer, worship and discussions of faith in the Christian lives of our children and young people.

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

- 10/1. The Conference received the Report.**
- 10/2. The Conference encouraged Local Preachers' Meetings and Circuit Leadership Teams to explore and promote a variety of worship styles which involve praying together, inviting open discussions about faith, and celebrate intergenerational learning.**
- 10/3. The Conference encouraged churches to address children and young people's passion for growing a deeper faith by exploring the question, "how can we make our Church a more praying Church?" by adding this to the agenda of all Church Council meetings before the 2023/2024 connexional year.**
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