

Address to voters for General Synod election

I would like to outline my reasons for standing for General Synod and to ask you for your first-choice vote.

My primary task as Archdeacon of Cambridge is to support local churches, across the range of traditions and contexts, which means that I have considerable experience and broad knowledge of the challenges and opportunities they face. I believe this puts me in a strong position to contribute at a national church level for the benefit of grassroots ministry and mission.

Alongside my support for parishes and other forms of local church, I have a longstanding interest in Church Schools. I chair the Diocesan Board of Education and serve on a number of other educational bodies at diocesan and local level. With around a million children in our schools across the country, I am keen to ensure that we do not neglect this opportunity to engage with young people and invite them to discover 'life in all its fullness,' as Jesus promised.

Another area of particular concern to me is vocation and ministry. I have the privilege of being a national adviser for the discernment of candidates for ordained ministry and I work in various ways for Theological Education Institutions. I believe that theological and spiritual formation for ministry is a priority, to equip lay ministers and clergy for faithful and fruitful ministry amid the complexity of modern life. This is an important piece of forthcoming business for General Synod, with profound consequences for the health of our church. I also think that the Church of England operates at its best when it takes theology and theological reflection seriously. I would approach General Synod business from this angle, rather than from an overly pragmatic or partisan position.

As the father of two teenage boys, I am acutely aware of the rapidly changing culture in which they are growing up. We grapple together daily to address contemporary issues – the environment, global inequality, gender and sexuality, identity politics, secularism and so on – all of which have a significant impact on the church too. I am still learning about these things and would welcome an opportunity to continue to listen to voices from this diocese in order to engage well in the debates that are ongoing in General Synod.

My ultimate concern is to ensure that the Church of England's attention and resources are directed towards our primary purposes, worked out at the local level: the worship of God; pastoral and spiritual support; evangelism; and loving service to the world. I trust that I have demonstrated this commitment as an archdeacon in Ely diocese and I hope that you will entrust me with the responsibility of serving on General Synod.

Thank you for taking the time to read this paper and please consider giving me your (first-choice) vote.



*The Venerable Dr Alex Hughes
Archdeacon of Cambridge*