

General Synod Election Address - Revd Nigel Genders



Ordained in 1992, I have served in the dioceses of Southwark, London and Canterbury.

During my 12 years in Canterbury Diocese I have served:

- as parish priest for Eastry and Tilmanstone
- in an innovative post combining parish priest for Woodnesborough and Staple with a brand new role as minister to Sandwich secondary schools
- as Area Dean for Sandwich.

In May 2008 I became Diocesan Director of Education and now have a wider diocesan role serving our 103 Church of England schools and encouraging the diocesan mission and ministry with children, young people and schools.

Why am I standing for election?

My experience over the past 18 years of ordained ministry has been broad and varied. I have served as a priest in this diocese for 12 years and now feel ready and able to represent the rich and diverse range of views within the Diocese of Canterbury at General Synod.

Inevitably the elections to this General Synod will focus on one or two high profile issues. However, my motivation to stand for election comes from a deep seated belief that the Church must resist the temptation to focus only on internal matters of organisation and structure and should rather strive to fulfil our calling to live and proclaim the gospel in our complex world.

As Director of Education I enjoy having the opportunity to bring the Church's perspective to a variety of local and national issues that impact on children, young people and schools, and in doing so I am heartened to see how others value the contribution we make. There is clearly a creeping secularisation agenda with public life in our country, and sometimes we believe too readily the negative story that the media tells about the secularisation of Britain and the inappropriateness of allowing the Church a voice. But despite the constant assertion that Britain is now a secular society I think that there is plenty of evidence to the contrary.

Earlier this year we were all stunned and shocked by a gunman going on a shooting rampage in Cumbria which left 12 people dead and a further 25 injured. In the aftermath, as people sought to come to terms with what had happened, it was a series of clergy men and women who were put before TV cameras in order to try and make sense of what had taken place and bring some comfort.

For me, this demonstrates that at the core of our society there is still a place and a need for parishes and their clergy to provide spiritual leadership for the nation, and the national Church must do all that it can to ensure that the resources at our disposal are used effectively so that that work can go on at a local level.

What do I see as priorities for the Church of England?

Whether small or large, rural or urban, network or parochial, the local worshipping community is the key to the success of the Church of England. Christians worshipping together, with dynamic and inspirational leadership, are a powerful force for good.

The coalition government talks about 'Big Society' and the Church has much to offer our society for the common good. We have a vast network of volunteers with a ready access to every city, town and village. We need to ensure that our resources are used effectively and our churches are equipped to make the most of the many opportunities for mission and ministry.

Children, Young People and Schools

I believe that each child and young person should have the opportunity to encounter the Christian story, to explore it, to weave it into their own lives and to become disciples of Christ, living and sharing the Gospel with others. Churches and schools provide a wonderful opportunity to make this possible and we should make this vitally important part of our mission a very high priority.

Resources

In order to develop our mission and ministry we need to think creatively and strategically about our resources. The biggest resource we have is our people, and so proper training and discipleship is crucial for every member of our church. But we also have a duty to use our financial and material resources effectively. I think that more can be done to streamline our central resources through greater collaboration between dioceses; and there is also room for a more strategic approach to the use of church buildings and the deployment of clergy if we are to be an effective church for the future.

And what about those Big Issues?...

Women in the Episcopate

Women continue to play a vital role in the life of the church. As an incumbent and Area Dean I have valued working with male and female colleagues alike and I am in favour of the progress in legislation to allow women in the episcopate. I want the Church to find a way forward which affirms women in the episcopate but also makes space for traditional Catholics and conservative evangelicals. Whether that be by means of the Code of Practice or through further amendments which provide a creative solution that doesn't result in there being two classes of bishop, is part of what the next Synod will need to give its attention to if we are to be sure of enabling there to be a real place within the Church of England for those who take different views.

The Anglican Covenant

In recent years our relations with each other in the Anglican family have been strained and we need to build relationships and have a sense that we are responsible to one another and responsible for each other. The Anglican Covenant seems an appropriate way to help us know where we stand together. It clearly won't be able to solve all of our problems, but I would support it as a tool to help the Anglican Communion strengthen its fellowship and trust.

Thank you for taking time to read this leaflet. As you decide who to vote for, please feel free to get in touch with any comments or questions: ngenders@diocant.org

I would be pleased to represent you at General Synod and would appreciate you placing me as high as possible in your voting preferences.

Nigel Genders

Proposed by: The Reverend Andrew Sewell
Seconded by: The Reverend Canon Lindsay Hammond