



SEEKING YOUR SUPPORT FOR ELECTION

TO THE GENERAL SYNOD HOUSE OF LAITY 2021



Clive Stephen George Billeness CISA

Archdeaconry of France,

Chaplaincy of Midi-Pyrenees & Aude



What difference can any single voice make among 250 Lay Members?

From the 250 members of laity elected from around the Church of England, the Diocese in Europe will have 3 Lay Members in the General Synod. With another 3 colleagues in the House of Clergy, we will be but 6 voices and yet we will be representing Anglicans from 26 countries stretching across 3 timezones and at least 300 churches – a total area of **6 MILLION** square kilometres - excluding Russia and North Africa.

We, as Diocese in Europe Members of General Synod, possibly carry one of the greatest responsibilities of all the Members as we must consult and communicate with so many Anglicans across Europe.

And yet decisions taken by General Synod can have far greater consequences for our congregations than for those in the UK because everything which makes its way into Canon Law has to be balanced against the legislation of those many countries. A lawyer colleague of mine in the French Catholic Church described this to me as “trying to cross a river on stepping stones and finding out that they are actually crocodiles”! We must therefore work together to ensure that anything enacted by the General Synod takes account of our unique legal and geographical situation.

My Commitment As A Member of General Synod

**I will ask the right questions of the right people -
then work with others to challenge the answers**

2 Timothy 2:15 “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”

If you have ever watched meetings of the General Synod online, you will note that most decisions which are brought there for approval are already quite well-evolved by the teams that have worked on them. The questions which are asked by members at General Synod meetings are therefore incredibly important to ensure that issues have been properly considered and different views balanced before a vote is taken. As an internationally-qualified auditor with 25 years’ experience, asking the right questions until I get a full answer is my speciality.

Of course, questioning is not for the purposes of tearing down, but for the purposes of learning and informing, to build up and strengthen our Community of Faith, for enabling clear reflection and for directing prayerful meditation and reflection. All of this will lead to better-informed decision-making.

If you will trust me to represent you, my objectives for the coming 5 years will be to contribute to the Synod’s thinking wherever possible, to listen to your concerns, to ask questions, to share the answers, to seek truth and to continue to work to build a solid, sustainable and faithful future for the Church of England so that we are better able to preach the Good News of Christ’s Gospel to all the World. Overleaf I have given you some more details about myself, my experience and my views on a number of important items.

I invite you to make me your First or Second Choice when you cast your vote.

Thank you for reading this.

Mrs Heidi Worswick - Lay Representative on Archdeaconry Synod of France

“I have not hesitated to nominate Clive Billenness having seen at first hand his energy, commitment, skills and integrity as well as his strong desire to advance the Mission of our Church. He has a very strong sense of justice and a true Christian mission to be honest and support and help both the Church and individuals.
I believe his will be a valuable voice on our General Synod”

MAJOR TOPICS FOR THE NEXT GENERAL SYNOD TO CONSIDER

<u>New Clergy Discipline Measure</u>	<u>Living In Love & Faith</u>	<u>10,000 New Worship Groups</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing CDM heavily criticised in 2020 by a judge New proposals still require further work to avoid causing harm to innocent people <p>I am already contributing to this issue via my membership of the Ecclesiastical Law Society and The Sheldon Hub Charity and would like to contribute further to make the process more effective - fair to all parties, just, and also transparently, impartially and professionally operated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The challenge will be to respond faithfully to changes in issues of identity, sexuality, relationship and marriage New Synod must consider how to respond <p>As a member of Inclusive Church I am committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and roles within the church, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, mental health or sexuality.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This vision carries very high risks and threatens to massively reduce the number of parish clergy. Funding is moving towards high-salary centralised job and away from parish clergy <p>I am a member of Save The Parish and I wish to make sure that these proposals are well thought-through and do not move resources (people and money) away from parishes towards Diocesan Offices, to the detriment of our local Church communities of faith.</p>

Abuse and Bullying in the Church of England

Our Church is now addressing the evil of sexual abuse. However, there is also considerable evidence of bullying occurring, of clergy, of lay officers and of congregation members. This is sometimes covered up by the use of Non-Disclosure Agreements despite criticism of them. I have published research on the physical and psychological harm bullying causes and have also recorded a 30-minute documentary on YouTube about this which has been watched over 1,600 times. I have received many messages of support from clergy, their families and from members of congregations who have had their lives, health and vocations harmed by bullying.

Yet the Church of England does not seem to regard bullying as a safeguarding matter. I intend to make this whole topic a high priority for consideration at General Synod

My Skills and Experience

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am a Certified Auditor still in practice specialising in IT and Information Systems GDPR Specialist I am the only Data Protection Officer registered to an Anglican Chaplaincy in France Practitioner-qualified in Programme, Project and Risk Management Member of French Ecumenical Groups for my part of France 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retired Senior Research Fellow at Portsmouth and Brighton Universities Former Senior Manager at the Audit Commission and at KPMG llp. Former European Research Project Manager at The British Library Finance Trustee of the Transcendence Trust (a Fresh Expressions Charity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degrees in French and in Theology (specialising in Canon Law) Post-Graduate qualified in Computer Science and IT Governance Currently undertaking pre-Doctoral research on Risk Management in the Church. Experienced in drafting Parliamentary legislation in 2 Government Departments
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Elections to the General Synod – 2021
David Coulston – Lay Candidate (from the Gibraltar Archdeaconry)

David Coulston

St Andrew's, Port de Pollença, Mallorca

Born: Lincoln, 1947

Contact details: If you'd like to speak to me please call me on 0044 (0)77407 79446 or email me at davidcoulston@gmail.com

Proposed by: Vicky Pacey (Mallorca)

Seconded by: Trevor Jones (Menorca)



A brief overview

A number of people will be seeking to represent the Diocese at General Synod and my personal plea is that we all give careful and prayerful consideration to discern what OUR LORD's wishes might be. If you feel that this could include me as a member then I would be both honoured and humbled.

- David has been an active member of Archdeaconry (Gibraltar) Synod for over 18 years, Diocesan Synod for the past 10 years and General Synod for the most recent (extended due to Covid!) quinquennial.
- He and his wife, Margaret, spend their time between Mallorca and the UK.
- David's contemporary approach to his faith continues to be as a 'liberal' who is equally happy in both an Evangelical or Anglo-Catholic setting. To him the key is that we worship OUR LORD without getting bogged down in name tags and labels.
- As a retired JP and a former senior Health, Safety and Environmental Protection specialist, and building on the General Synod experience over the past 6 years, David feels he has the skills to be able to continue to fully represent and promote the diocese at General Synod.
- If you would like to know more please contact David directly.

A bit of personal information about David.

David has been a 'comer and goer' between Mallorca and the UK for over 24 years. It was in this role that he was first elected to the Gibraltar Archdeaconry Synod in 2003 to be a voice for the many members of the congregation at St Andrews, Port de Pollença who, similarly, spend their time between Mallorca and other places.

He was elected as Archdeaconry Treasurer and, on stepping back from that role, as the current Archdeaconry Lay Chair.

David was first elected to Diocesan Synod some 10 years ago and has continued to play an active role as the current Diocesan Lay Chair and a member of Bishop's Council. At Diocesan level David has been closely involved in a number of activities most recently including:

- The promotion of the initiatives aimed at supporting our clergy. Particularly, leading the development (with the archdeaconry/deanery Lay Chairs) of 'User Guides' (available on the Diocesan Web Site) to assist chaplaincies in this important matter
- Taking an active role as a member of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Committee including the production of guidance for Chaplaincies in a number of key areas of our activities.
- Fully supporting the 'Living in Love and Faith' work across the diocese as well as a number of other essential initiatives aimed at addressing the issues of diversity wherever they may appear.
- An active member of a Working Group currently looking to sharpen up our approach to dealing with bullying behaviour.

As a member of General Synod, David has sought to promote our diocese within the broader Church of England (there are many who are not properly aware of our existence) and, in

discussion with other members, to ensure that our needs are properly recognised. We are by no means 'unique' – but ministering across multiple countries is a little different to English diocesan life! On a practical front, David was appointed to the General Synod Standing Orders Committee on which he currently serves. This is not as 'dry' as you might think as setting the right way by which Synod operates is essential to good governance and can have an impact on how we as a diocese are perceived.

When not engaged in matters for our diocese, David enjoys the company of his family (having recently relocated our UK home to be nearer to our grandchildren!) and a range of hobbies including choral singing, family History, carpentry and railway modelling!

Before retiring, David's work was as a senior Health, Safety & Environmental Protection specialist. This included a spell as a member of the UK Health & Safety Commission as well as many senior UK and European committees.

David has been married to Margaret since 1971. They have two children and four wonderful grandchildren and feel that they have been greatly blessed by THE LORD.

Where does David stand on the issues of today?

David has been a committed Anglican for as long as he can remember. Although originally a somewhat conservative Anglo-Catholic, David has today found strength in taking a liberal approach to his faith and one which embraces all forms of worship from the very evangelical approach of his son's church in Houston to the set traditions of his roots. He feels that this journey in faith has provided a sound basis for understanding the concerns of the traditionalist conservative whist fully endorsing the need for the Church to move forwards in a modern and diverse environment.

The challenges which have arisen in recent times (including questions of human sexuality, the environment, economic uncertainties, safeguarding our children & vulnerable adults (especially in the aftermath of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse report regarding the Church of England)) are issues which David believes will continue to be an important matter of debate within General Synod. There will be many who will be disturbed by the changes which may be necessary – but he believes that by careful and prayerful consideration an inclusive approach will be possible to embrace the many diverse matters OUR LORD is placing before us.

What strengths would David bring if elected?

A period as an 'interim manager' helping organisations to climb out of some pretty deep holes required both humour and humility as well as an ability to bring together management and trades union representatives who had been at odds with one another on some key issues. This ability to work with disparate groups to achieve a common goal is a strength David has found to be invaluable in his involvement within General Synod and in particular in seeking to properly represent and promote the Diocese at General Synod over the past 6 years.

Would you like to know more?

If you would like to know more about me do please get in touch. A telephone call would be good as it would enable us to have a conversation – but I am quite happy to respond to email queries (though I have to admit I am sometimes a bit slow!).

Dear Electors of the Diocese in Europe,

Faithfully I address you and thank you for your time reading about my walk with GOD and biography.

My childhood and youth was shadowed by the communist dictatorship of East Germany. Every step of my life was already planned by a government that influenced its people to think that religion is opium for masses. I grew up believing this to be true.

1989 was a very special year. I moved in summer from my tiny home town to the big city of Leipzig to start studying German and Art. The Government allowed me to become a teacher. Only that I did have no other choice if I wanted to live comfortably in the GDR. My first day in Leipzig was a Monday. It was the first time I came in close contact with the "prayers for peace" movement at the *Nikolaikirche*. Four weeks later I was demonstrating on the street myself, opposing threats to be thrown from university into prison. Many people marched peacefully between rows of fully armed police. I was lucky that no "Stasi" found out.

When the wall came down my view of the world was turned upside down. My reaction was that I didn't want to have anything to do with politics or religion. Freedom to choose my way in life was my top priority. But the LORD caught me anyway. But that story comes later.

With the birth of my first son in 1996 I moved to the UK to be with the father, who was working as a doctor in Southend-on-Sea. One day I went into one of the second-hand shops looking for a particular kind of paper for a DIY job. I found a blue book with very thin paper and all writings in two rows. I took it home and started on the project. The first page torn out I looked what was written on it. It was 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. I was so offended by this passage. It felt so degrading. How could any woman be a believer, I asked myself. In the next year I had many conversations with people from different religions. I read the Koran, the book of Mormon and Hare Krishna. No answer could satisfy me. Then back in Leipzig I met my new neighbours, who were members of the Anglican church in Leipzig. They welcomed me into their church and shortly after I found my answers.

Two years later GOD put in my heart to get married to the father of my children. Our married life was blessed by the LORD with a third child. In 2002 all three boys were baptised. 2006 I was elected into church council. Now I serve as a Synod Representative. I also got politically involved and served on the *Stadtbezirksbeirat* (borough council). In 2016 I was elected to be the chair and spokesperson for the *Kreiselterrat* (statutory

parents' council), giving parents of around 46,000 children a voice towards the government of the city of Leipzig.

It was a time where I had to consider all views parents have on the educational system.

In 2017 our family was hit by the tragic death of my husband. After years and years of struggling with depression he took his own life and left my three sons and me completely devastated. Without the help of the LORD and my congregation I would never had the strength to recover from that traumatic experience. I'm absolutely thankful for all the prayers and support given to my sons and me. This suffering helped me to learn more about GOD'S ways. On top of it I did a course in Christian counselling to help others in similar situations.

As a widow GOD provided me with a good job to support my sons. I love them dearly and pray they will follow Him. They even got me into a youth camp called InterAction where I served for seven years, first in Belgium, now in Germany.

I know after just 20 years in the faith and as a German I'm still a newcomer to the Anglican Church but I am willing to serve. I believe there are some areas where I could make a contribution to General Synod. That would be:

- knowing what it's like to be coming to faith from a completely secular background
- concern for Christians facing persecution in totalitarian systems like GDR
- heightened awareness of mental health issues
- working together with people of differing views for the common good

My congregation comes together from many nations with very different Christian backgrounds. Even our views on Corona differ. But being aware and sensitive on perspectives we managed to stay one body. I stand to keep division out of church.

I'm happy to answer any questions you have (contact details below).

Please vote for me.

Yours in Christ

Petra Elias



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Robin Hall

Chaplaincy of St Nicholas, Basel

Lay member, Archdeaconry Synod, Switzerland

mail@robinhall.org



Proposed: Julianne Funk, Chaplaincy of St Andrew's Zürich, Archdeaconry of Switzerland

Seconded: Clive Billenness, Chaplaincy of Midi-Pyrenees & Aude, Archdeaconry of France

About me

I have been a member of the Anglican Church in Basel since 2015. I have also lived in Hong Kong, where I worshipped at St John's Cathedral, and in London for 12 years, where I was a member of Southwark Cathedral's congregation. From 2010 to 2015, I was a lay member of General Synod, representing Southwark diocese.

I am originally from Wales and was baptised and confirmed in the Church in Wales.

Following university, I was an immigration and housing caseworker in the East End of London, working with some of the area's most disadvantaged residents. I later pursued a career in communications and I now work in Research & Development Communications for an agricultural sciences company, as well as coaching students in Business English.

I have been in a civil partnership for nine years and my partner is a diplomat based in Switzerland. I speak English, German and basic French.

Experience

- Member of the Swiss Archdeaconry Synod 2016
- Coordinate church volunteers for rough sleepers café in Basel
- Lead and organise regular, ecumenical Iona services
- Chair our Evening Service group
- Sacristan (and Zoom operator!) for our Evening Service
- Member of standing committee, Anglican Church Basel 2018-21
- Member of General Synod, 2010-15
- School Governor with link to RE, Tidemill School 2007-13
- Fairtrade produce manager, Southwark Cathedral, 2005-13
- Chapel Clerk, University College, Durham 1998-00

Why I am standing

Our calling is to preach the Gospel afresh to every generation. The Church of England is in a special position to do that because we offer a Christian presence in every English community, and in Europe we bring the Good News of Jesus to varied communities, cultures and contexts.

I believe we can further harness the geographical spread of our parishes and chaplaincies to make Jesus known to a diverse range of people. To do so, the parishes and chaplaincies need the support of central church bodies, using their financial and political strength to support us at a local level, as well as nationally.

After a six year break from General Synod, I feel called to stand again as the Church looks to emerge from the pandemic, engages with Living in Love and Faith and reimagines its vision and strategy.

We know that many people find the church off-putting – our internal arguments about gender and sexuality distract from our mission and, to others, they contradict what should be at our core – a community which loves God and loves each other.

You can read more about my views on the next page. My primary responsibility, if elected, is to represent all the laity of the Diocese in Europe. I pledge to be accountable, engaging and prayerful, making sure I canvas opinions, report back from sessions and approach contentious issues prayerfully.

I would be very grateful for your first or second choice vote.

Yours in Christ,



Some key issues

Social justice

The Church of England is already on the front-line of welfare and pastoral provision, including in European chaplaincies where outreach work with poor and immigrant communities is Christian love in action. I want central church bodies to do more to support this work, using bold initiatives that leverage the church's financial and political muscle. Our efforts in tackling pay-day loan companies nationally show the strategic way the church can improve lives.

Safeguarding

Thankfully, safeguarding is now reasonably embedded at many levels of our church structures. We must continue to listen to past victims to ensure we remain vigilant to the ways vulnerable children and adults can be abused, and do not become complacent.

The environment

As stewards of creation – and one of England's largest property owners – we should be leaders and not followers in reducing carbon emissions. Good progress has already been made but our national target of net zero by 2050 is not ambitious enough. I support bringing this target forward.

Living in Love & Faith

The status quo is neither just nor sustainable. I do not believe the Church of England will right the wrongs of decades of discrimination against LGBT people during the next five years. However, I am opposed to priests in same-sex marriages being discriminated against and I want to see the Church move towards blessing same-sex marriages – as the Church in Wales is doing – as a first step towards equal marriage, following our Anglican/Episcopal brethren in Scotland and the USA.

Vision & Strategy

This will be a key topic over the next five years. I am sympathetic to the aims of the 'Save the Parish' network, which feels threatened by potential reorganisations which could erode the church's presence, especially in rural and suburban settings. While I am not opposed to church planting, I believe there should always be a bias towards funding and supporting existing parish communities first.

Women's ministry

As a member of General Synod between 2010 and 2015, I was proud to vote for the legislation for women bishops. I remain committed to supporting women's ministry throughout the church, and in all ordained offices.

Clergy discipline measure

It has become clear the CDM is no longer fit for purpose and has led to some unjust situations for clergy. I want to see it reformed so that it cannot be misused and place clergy – many reliant on the church for their homes - in uncertain and vulnerable positions.

My pledges to you

Accountable

Provide a written report following Synod meetings explaining how and why I voted.

Engaging

Canvas opinion on key issues and listen to your views.

Prayerful

Approach each topic in prayer, especially where there may be strong or divergent opinions.

Good disagreement

Over the next five years, General Synod will deal with challenging issues, with strong opinions held on both sides. When we cannot reach consensus, I believe we need embody good disagreement – holding each other in prayer, respectfully and lovingly as the Spirit moves the Church forward. In a more divided society, the Church needs to demonstrate how people can disagree with each other well.

Interest groups

Many Synod members join groups within Synod. I believe you have a right to know which groups I belong to.

I am a member of Inclusive Church and I wholeheartedly endorse their mission statement: *"I am committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and roles within the church, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, mental health or sexuality."*

I am also a member of Women and the Church (WATCH), the Campaign for Equal Marriage and Affirming Catholicism.

Rosette Morrison

My name is Rosette Morrison, and I was born in Eastern Uganda, close to where the River Nile starts its journey to the Red Sea. I am married to John, from the Outer Hebrides, Scotland with whom we have been blessed with two children who are 23 and 19 years old. We have lived in the Netherlands for 26 years, where I work as an International Human Rights Lawyer. Pre-COVID, I coordinated the International Students' Ministry, which entailed bringing together a group of between 12-30 international students from all over the world, but mainly from the African continent to our home, for 20 years, for a three course meal and bible study every Tuesday. I am also passionate about prayer and I therefore coordinated the Prayer Ministry Team, and Intercessors Ministry for the Chaplaincy. I love to cook and entertain so I have also been an active member of the catering ministry.

Representation and being a voice for Women and the BAME community, by not just "ticking" those boxes but being actively involved in debates and raising issues of concern is important to me and I am persuaded that I have something to offer in this regard.

I have been on the Diocesan Synod where I assisted with the drafting of the Harassment/Bullying/Sexual Abuse & Exploitation Policy, which comes from my professional experience as a human rights lawyer with the United Nations and the work that I have done.

I am an avowed Anglican from the womb to the tomb, having worked with the Provincial Offices of the Church of Uganda as a Human Rights Programme Officer and Director of the Training Centre in Kampala. I feel called to continue serving God at the General Synod and being a rare voice at this important Synod, which I believe will benefit from my broad experience.



MARY TALBOT

General Synod member 2019-2021

I thank you for electing me to the General Synod for what turned into the final two years of the last extended quinquennium. Much has happened in that time. I ask you to grant me the privilege to build on that short experience and to represent you for a further term, at a time when the world and the church face many challenges and an increasing call to promote Christian values of mutual respect, equality and justice and to consider the church's legacy for future generations.

- Christian care for creation is intrinsically related to our belief in the incarnation and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. General Synod members must use their voice, both within and without, to bring about necessary changes to halt the apocalyptic effects of climate change and loss of biodiversity, which affect us all but particularly those most vulnerable.
- Covid-19, which has affected many of our chaplaincies, has in many ways shown the Church of England at its best in the way it serves its communities, but it has also laid bare its decreasing numbers and finances. Seeking to follow the call to focus on Jesus Christ; discerning the right shape and form of a mixed ecology church; finding a balance between the traditional parish system and new expressions of church; juggling with technology and the emergence of both in person and online services; are areas where the European voice could contribute from its different pattern of financing and geographic spread. Decisions taken over the next five years will determine the church's shape and future for decades.
- Brexit is a particular challenge to people in our Diocese, but also impacts the national church. General Synod could use its influence to seek modifications to some of the procedures that adversely affect us both as a Diocese and as individuals: our ability to recruit clergy; the training and development of ordinands; student visas and exchanges.
- Racial justice, human sexuality, safeguarding, social justice: my time on Synod has made me starkly aware of the pain and frustration caused in many areas where people feel discriminated against, excluded and sometimes abused. Our failings as a church have been made painfully obvious. Our deep divisions in some areas have been exposed. I am committed to listening to and trying to understand the different voices and working towards a church of mutual trust and respect and to support these programmes within the Diocese and locally. I have worked hard to honour and promote diversity within my chaplaincy and archdeaconry;
- I have a particular interest in recognizing and enhancing the role played by lay people, not to the detriment of but as a complement to that of clergy, and together with them. I am encouraged by the increasing recognition that lay people are critical to missional work both within and beyond the boundaries of the church. Since my election to General Synod, over the last 18 months I have acted as the 'enabler' of the Diocesan pilot for Setting God's People Free (Everyday Faith), which seeks both to recognise and affirm lay

people as disciples of Christ in all parts of their everyday lives, and to promote and encourage greater lay/clergy mutuality. The pilot has been a rewarding journey for lay and clergy working together, which I hope we can encourage as a pattern elsewhere. I act as a pastoral mentor to candidates on the Diocesan MES (Ministry Experience Scheme), a programme offering young people a placement in one of our chaplaincies, education and personal development to discern their vocation, most frequently to the ordained ministry. I also trained with the Diocese and elsewhere as a Spiritual Director, another form of discernment offered to both clergy and lay.

- I believe passionately in the role of children and young people in the life of the church, and I have come to understand increasingly the importance of inter-generational activity. I remain part of what is now a thankfully growing group seeking to raise the profile of young people's ministry at diocesan level and equally importantly to provide a service for the chaplaincies. We owe our young people urgent action and care for Creation.

I have lived and worked in continental Europe for over 30 years and in Geneva for 26 years. My professional career was in HR for an international company. My roles included responsibility for HR across continental Europe, subsequently the Middle East and Africa, and finally Management Development across all three areas. I have been treasurer and now warden for my own church and lay chair for the Archdeaconry Synod. I am an active member of the Diocesan Synod, where I have been involved in various ways.

God calls us individually and corporately to discern where he is moving and what he is calling us to do. There are many people in the diocese with greater skills than I, but in standing for election to General Synod, I offer what I have.

Mary Talbot

August 2021

Simon Urquhart
Utrecht, The Netherlands

- Background

Member of Diocese in Europe Synod and Bishop's Council; Archdeaconry of North West Europe Synod and Anglican Churches in The Netherlands Deanery.
Member of Council and past secretary for Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Utrecht.
Member of PCC and past churchwarden for St John the Evangelist, Taunton.

Born in Glasgow in 1949, I was baptised into the Scottish Episcopal Church, confirmed in 1962 in the Church of England and served as a chorister since the age of five. I administer the Chalice and Paten with Bishop of Bath + Well's permission.

I am an architect, who has worked in social housing for most of my career, as a designer and director. My initial university training as an architect, followed by a diploma in urban and social planning, led to wider roles in social housing.

I have lived in The Netherlands for over eighteen years with my Dutch partner and, now retired, I act as an informed client for both churches in Utrecht and Taunton, on a voluntary basis. My home is in Utrecht but, in "normal" times, I travel, to Taunton each month and, less often, to Aberdeen to my family, worshipping at St Andrew's Episcopal Cathedral.

- General Synod

I am standing for election to Synod as I view the next few years, in the Anglican Church, as seminal in the formation of a future that is open and welcoming to all. Should I be elected, it would be my first term, so whilst I have thoughts on the current and future complex issues to be considered by Synod, there is much to learn and reflect upon, to successfully represent the issues in our Diocese. Our Diocesan can be most effective by working together, using the strengths and knowledge of each, for maximum impact.

Many challenges continue to be laid at our door, both as individuals and church communities, so a clear route-map to ensure that our faith leads us into relevance, within our wider communities, is key. This is particularly evident in our Diocese, with such diverse communities and issues and, solutions often constrained by differing national requirements and regulation. Perhaps we need a core mission, to serve for all, uncomfortable as this may be at times for some of us.

If we recognise that our voice is often shaped by our experiences and knowledge, then the vast range of voices from others must also be heard. Through listening and recognising the value in each, we could begin a transformative approach to a sustainable, living church. Requiring generosity of spirit, as well as challenge, the aim not personal satisfaction, rather to embrace those, whom at present, we do not serve, or serve imperfectly. I would like to see a church for today that recognises the changes and uncertainties in society, whilst maintaining those tenets of Christianity, centred on love that make a difference.

Over the last year, I have written a series of articles for the church magazine in Taunton, the thread posing questions, not solutions. What is essential in worship, access to church for all, joy in fellowship, what is truth and the value of structured leadership? The subjects being a journey through Covid and the church's response to opening up, in all senses. They may be seen as self-indulgent ramblings by some but, they gave me the space to reflect and, I think, as relevant to us in Europe as in the parish based churching in the United Kingdom.

We have varying lines of responsibility and compliance but, the core of being an Anglican is something that cannot not be subsumed or lost. Especially so when, our ecumenical approach in Europe, welcomes so many from different backgrounds into our church. A recent joint service in Taunton with the United Reform Church, Methodists and St John's, brought focus: All Trinitarians, worshipping one God but with significant differences in approach to many social and theological issues. The local joint working is carried out in love and respect; the core being our Christianity, not our differences. That is truly a "broad church".

In Utrecht, a section of our church community uses a very strict interpretation of scripture, allowing little movement or progress concerning some of the issues Synod has been grappling with over the years. The same may be said of the wider Anglican Communion; we try to love and work together and, despite the odds seemingly stacked against this, there is still some success but it cannot be at any cost.

Whilst not using the "parish" system in Europe, the "Save the Parish" movement says a lot that is relevant for us, in protecting our communities and growth. These two quotes from the Church Times on 4 August, by Madeleine Davies speak to me:

- *Rector, the Revd Marcus Walker, spoke of the need for a "co-ordinated campaign" that would unite Anglicans across traditions, transcending debates about women's ordination and same-sex marriage.*
- *"Are we the C of E with its reformed Catholic character, its sacraments, orders, and liturgies, and its parish witness, or are we a Nonconformist sect? There are hard decisions to be made in a Church during a period of secularisation and atheism, but they should be taken by those who love the Church of England. Indeed, even marketing will tell you that you cannot promote a product in which you do not believe."*

I hope we will look carefully on the potentially divisive issues being considered at General Synod, making thoughtful, balanced comment and decisions that may bring impassioned argument but are vital to our sustained growth in faith. That could be our "co-ordinated campaign". I hope that I would have the thoughtfulness and experience to serve our Diocese in this, on General Synod.

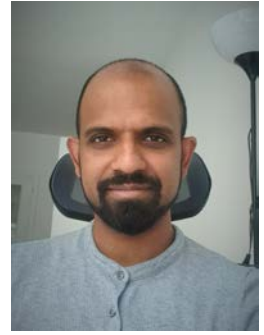
Simon Urquhart
06SEP21

General Synod Elections 2021

Caleb VICTOR

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Personal Background

- I am of Indian origin, having lived in Tanzania (10 years), India (15 years) and now France (13 years). Born in an Anglican family and have always been very close to the church. Parents have degrees in religious studies, grew up reading the Bible and living in Christian environments (home, schools, universities, ...)
- Education: Double Masters in Sustainable food manufacturing and International business completed in Chennai, India and Lille, France
- Currently employed in a French multinational company in the facilities management business as Director, Creative Solution Center
- Passionate about creative, new ways of doing the simple little things that makes everyone's life better, easier, and more efficient
- Married since 2018 and living in Paris France. If you don't already know me and were able to ask those who do, I believe I would be described as friendly, cheerful, passionate, enthusiastic, principled, doer

Parish Background

- Since 2012 in SMP, I have sung tenor in the choir, participated in a home group, volunteered at the audio visual and sound desk, planned & helped execute youth events, participated in men's ministries, and lead a men's monthly prayer breakfast, member of the council, member of the synod in France, preached and led services on Sundays (a couple of time yearly), and participated in the 7-year strategic planning committee to propose key initiatives to the church council
- During 2020 with the COVID 19 lockdown, I led all the changes to be made in the church building following the physical distancing and safety measures that had to be implemented for safe continuity of worship
- These experiences have provided me with a unique insight into the working of an Anglican English-speaking church in the French community, as well as an informed perspective of some of the financial, operational, and organisational challenges which the Church faces today

My commitment

In seeking election as one of the lay representatives for SMP on General Synod, I commit that I will:

- Invest the time and effort needed to fulfil my obligations passionately and faithfully
- Be curious and listen carefully to everyone and all sides of each case and the topics discussed in the various synod sessions. I also commit to my role in prayer seeking the Spirit's guidance before deciding where to cast my vote when needed
- Summarize what happens at the synod and share with the local community

This is something new for me, so as I much as I will be learning new things and how the general synod works, I am also really looking forward to participating and sharing with other general synod members to strive for a united body of Christ

Proposal

Proposer: Alain Karam (Saint Michaels Church, Paris)

Seconder: Francis Coester (Christ Church Lille)

Thank you again for considering my candidacy. Contact me if you would like to know more about me

I would be honoured to represent Saint Michael's Paris for 5 years and do hope I can secure your vote

General Synod Elections 2021 – House of Laity, Diocese in Europe

Alison Walley

Chaplaincy:

Holy Trinity Cannes, Archdeaconry of France

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Dear Elector

It is both a privilege and a challenge to present myself as a candidate to represent our vast diocese at General Synod. The new synod needs to respond to various tensions. One is between holding onto our core beliefs and traditions while being open and welcoming to all as we proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. Another is the tension between the managerial (we must be competent) and the pastoral (we must care). Matters are complicated because of the need to work out practically how the vision for the 2020s is to be implemented in the face of, among other things, financial pressures, a rapidly changing church, the zero carbon challenge and in the European context, post-Brexit issues.

I was raised in Anglicanism. It has weaved its way through my life and has shaped, and continues to shape who I am as a Christian. Theologically, I hold firmly to a traditional biblical faith as handed down by the apostles and expressed in the 39 Articles, the Book of Common Prayer and the Creeds. Experientially, from what I've seen and done in life, I am able to see Anglicanism's strengths and weaknesses from the outside. There are no easy answers to the tensions the Church of England faces. However as someone who has lived in a variety of places and cultures and been employed in secular, spiritual and educational spheres, I am willing to serve in the attempt to resolve some of them.

About me

My parents were both enthusiastic Christians and I can't remember a time when I did not go to church. I made a personal choice to follow Jesus when I was 12, though it wasn't until I went to university that I realised my faith should be more than something in my head, but a committed obedience which should result in action. The Christian Union and my local Anglican church were immensely helpful here.

This led me to work in editing and publicity in the office of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES). Following that, in 1978, to work with IFES in Lebanon, part of a team (under a CMS boss) based at a centre in west ("mainly Muslim") Beirut near two English-speaking universities. I worshipped in a church run by American Southern Baptists – more of a culture shock than being with the Lebanese! At the centre I worked alongside students from many different Christian backgrounds (Orthodox, Maronite, Catholic, various Protestant traditions) and found that in Christ we had so much in common and, listening to one another, could work together. In addition I knew many Muslim students and, for example, would break the Ramadan fast with them.

I met my (British) husband, who was lecturing at the American University of Beirut. Our two sons were born in Beirut under difficult circumstances and we were all eventually evacuated in 1984. We then spent 10

years in Swansea, south Wales. In addition to raising our children, I was involved in the local community and began freelance editing. My husband was asked to help with a growing student work at a local Baptist church, which we ended up attending and where I became involved with the children's work; we also developed an interest in the environment with the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales.

When my husband was invited to chair the Geology Department in Beirut we returned to Lebanon in the mid-90s. There we worshipped at the Anglican chaplaincy (All Saints), where I was on the church council. As in so many Anglican chaplaincies there was a wide range of church backgrounds and nationalities. During our four years in Beirut my husband and I were instrumental in starting A Rocha Lebanon and with it the preservation of the country's main wetland in the Bekaa valley. During this time I was socially and professionally involved with people from a very wide range of cultures.

When we returned to Swansea for our children's education we continued involvement with A Rocha and our previous church. During this time I was on the church council and a Sunday school teacher, and we were involved in various inter-church initiatives.

An opportunity arose for us to take early retirement and be involved with A Rocha France at their centre in the mountains above Nice. Seven years later we live halfway between A Rocha France's two centres (the other near Arles), which we regularly visit. I am responsible for the [English language section of their website](#) and help to produce 'prayers for creation', which go out daily (in French). One of my first major activities after moving to France was helping to organise a Christian response to the environment for COP21 in Paris, December 2015, which we attended.

I am very much involved in the local community, particularly with the [town's heritage association](#), whose bilingual website I manage and for whom I give regular guided tours in French. I am also secretary of our local international women's group.

From our arrival in France in 2014 we have worshipped at Holy Trinity Cannes with its widespread and diverse congregation. I am now on the church council where I am one of the France Archdeaconry representatives and the Eco Rep. I am also involved in the children's work, manage the church website and am a congregational worship leader.

A final word

I believe that our discipleship is about following Jesus all the time, wherever we are. I am committed to a local, national and global expression of the body of Christ, where we can listen to, pray for, and stand with each other.

Thank you for reading this letter! I hope you will give me your vote.

Employment

I was mainly a freelance copy-editor, for a number of publishers, both secular and religious. I have edited books for Lion, SPCK and IVP, including work on some of IVP's scholarly Bible/ theological dictionaries.

I worked as the English-language editor for the publishing department at the American University of Beirut and in Swansea I was copy-editor for a national computing magazine for three years.

I have also been a professional trainer on computers and software and latterly was a part-time administrator for the Social Services training department in Swansea.