



GENERAL SYNOD ELECTION ADDRESS

PETER GREENMAN

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Deanery: Henley
Parish: Holy Trinity, Henley

WHO AM I?

I am the children's and youth lay worker at Holy Trinity Church, Henley and have served here for the last 4.5 years. It is a wonderful job being able to share the good news of the Christian faith with many children, young people and families in our town.

I was born in Oxford but grew up in Hull.

I was fortunate to grow up in a Christian home and attended a Baptist church where I came to a clear personal faith, being baptised aged 18. Since then I've enjoyed worshipping in Church of England churches, where I have felt very much at home.

I studied chemistry at Oxford University, but the laboratory life was not for me!

Henley has become a wonderful home for myself and my wife and the love and friendship of the church community here has been such a blessing.

Outside of work, I am a keen flautist, a bit of a Star Trek nerd and an avid sports fan. Most Saturdays in the summer are spent on the cricket field, often with minimal success!

EXPERIENCE

Over the past three years I have served as one of our lay Deanery Synod reps.

This has given me opportunities to engage with the churches across the deanery, with our breadth of traditions and theological positions and to hear of the different challenges that we all face. In particular, it has begun to give me an appreciation of the particular hardships facing the many rural parishes in our area.

In addition I have enjoyed serving as a member of our PCC.

In this capacity, I have been involved in discussions shaping the future of our own church and have always sought to use my position to be a voice for children, youth and families.

I am organised and diligent, skills that I believe would stand me in good stead for serving on General Synod.

Outside of church governance, I am on the committee of my cricket club and on the leadership team for a summer youth camp.

WHY GENERAL SYNOD?

In my role, I have the privilege of interacting with around 400 children, youth and families a week and it is wonderful to have the opportunity to share the Christian faith with them.

It is such a joy to see young people come to a personal faith in Jesus.

I am standing for Synod because I would like to play my part in ensuring that the church continues to be a place of welcome for children, youth and families for years to come and that the blessings of following Jesus and being a part of his people would get to be enjoyed by many.

Throughout history our churches have been places of welcome for children, heeding the call from Jesus himself in Mark 10:14: “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these”. We can learn much from their dependence and trust.

We also have something we can offer to the young people we see around us. Amidst a loneliness epidemic among young people the church can, and should, be place of welcome and fellowship. In a world that feels increasingly hopeless, I believe we have a good news message of hope for them.

It was greatly encouraging to hear Bishop Steven, in his Presidential address to Diocesan Synod, stress the need for churches across our Diocese to make work with children, youth and families a real priority. The desire to ensure that the voice of young people is heard and actively engaged with in every parish and deanery is exactly what we should be doing. It is a very tangible way of engaging with our Marks of Mission and I would love to see it be a focus for the Church of England as a whole.

Paul urges us in Ephesians 5 to “make the most of every opportunity”, and we have such great opportunities at our disposal. The parish system, with a church in every conurbation, is a wonderful thing and gives us a foothold into every community. This is to be celebrated and wouldn't it be wonderful if our churches were real places of haven for children and young people of every background and walk of life? Our support of 4,600 schools nationwide, 283 of which are in our Diocese, gives us another wonderful opportunity. In a world where bad news predominates, we are well positioned to tell young people a different message, one of good news of God's love.

I know full well how hard and tiring ministry to young people and families is, but it is such a valuable and biblical area into which we as a church should be investing.

My hope is to be a voice for children, young people and families on General Synod, and I feel in my capacity as a lay worker in this field, I would be well placed to serve in this way.

My prayer is that the Church of England would remain true to God's word and would continue, as it has done throughout its history, to “tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord” (Psalm 78:4).



Me in full swing teaching our Sunday school group of 7-11 year olds



In character as a Temple guard for an interactive retelling of the Easter story for families

Thank you for reading, if you have any questions, do get in touch at the above email address.