

Luke Appleton

Paignton Parish Churchwarden
Diocesan Synod Member



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

My name is Luke Appleton and I am a millennial who lives in sunny Paignton with my wife Emily, our beautiful daughter Alice and three cats (Sophia, Toby and Moose). A bit about me. I work in Digital Marketing and love to play the clarinet. I have a keen interest in technology and love spending time with my family. I currently worship and serve at Paignton Parish Church where I have been one of two Churchwardens during a challenging but rewarding vacancy. Previously I have attended St Mary Steps in Exeter and before the pandemic worshipped regularly at Exeter Cathedral during the week. My secular vocation brings me into close contact with our country's future leaders and I learn so much from them. My faith starts and ends with Jesus Christ. I have been through some incredibly difficult years and He has been my sustainer. My core values are truth, honesty and integrity. Therefore this address will not dance around what I think, but rather will be clear about what I stand for and the change I would like to see. I also love to chat church so whether you agree with me or not I would love to hear from you. The best way to reach me is by emailing post@lukeappleton.co.uk or if you're not online you can call me on 07806729083. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have or simply to have a chat. I am asking you to put me as your First Preference Vote.

Now a bit about what I stand for.

Defending the Parish

There have been rumours circulating about the future of the Parish System. Now I am not against exploring new ways to 'do church' but the Parish System is core. A key anxiety is that new church plants will be funded by dismantling parishes. This needs to be clarified and if true opposed. The past 18 months have proven that when everything else fails, the Parish is still there for us. So the Parish system needs to be both defended but also funded to thrive.

Stipendiary Clergy

Every year the number of paid clergy declines. I am in no way diminishing SSM or lay ministry. But our stipendiary ministers are vital to our church's mission and I reject the notion they are a 'limiting factor'. As the Bible says 'Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel' - 1 Cor 9:14 (AV)

Defending Small Churches

Some treat churches as though they are outlets. A sort of ecclesiastical version of Greggs. To their mind, a church with a small congregation is a liability. But churches are more like outposts. A small church can still be a powerful witness to a community. We must be realistic - some churches may need to close. But it should be a last resort, not a strategic goal.

Demographic Timebomb

Just 9% of the population go to church each week¹ and only 2% of millennials (like me) consider themselves Anglican². Clearly, this shows that the church faces a demographic time-bomb. If the Church of England is to have a future it needs to face this challenge head-on.

Changes to Doctrine

I believe the Bible is God's Inspired Word. Our Church subscribes to Hooker's notion of Scripture, Reason and Tradition. These are Ands, not Ors. Any changes to our doctrine must be reformations, not revolutions. As there has not been a solid Biblical case made for a change to the Marriage Canon I cannot support any attempts to change it. If we want young people to respect us, we must know why we stand for what we do.

Day of Repentance

I support a national day of repentance for the abuse that took place within the church. It is important that victims get justice and that our institution repents where it has failed. Both to the country but also to God.

End Campaigning

I originally thought General Synod was going to be a sort of Bible Study. How wrong I was. To quote Brenda from Bristol "there's too much politics". People have been behaving like the worst sides of politics instead of the best sides of the church. Our decision making should be rooted in Scripture and Prayer, not political campaigning.

Focus on Everybody

Of course we need to reach the young. But it is very important we don't forget about our older church members. Too often their needs are pushed to the side - despite making the biggest contribution to our churches.

Other Issues

Though I have never partaken in it myself, I believe we should not undermine the seal of confession. I would like to see greater accountability in the church to tackle racism and safeguarding issues and I would also like to see more decision making happen in forums like Deanery Synod rather than behind closed doors.

My Promise to You

If elected I will be available to talk with you, to discuss any issues of concern your church may have or to speak directly to PCC's all year-round. Representing you is not just twice a year but all the time. I believe firmly in getting things done and if there is even one issue we share a passion for then I am asking for your First Preference Vote.

Get in touch: post@lukeappleton.co.uk

¹ <http://www.whychurch.org.uk/trends.php>

² <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/millennials-shun-modern-liturgy-for-bells-and-smells-nqtvjf3kk>