

Mrs Elizabeth Ann Pangbourne

1. What has prompted you to stand for election to General Synod in particular, and in which ways do you think it will challenge your capacity and capabilities?

I long for the Church of England to be united in its purpose: to preach the gospel, to lead people to faith in Jesus and to care for those in need in every city, town, and village through the network of local Churches and parish priests.

Throughout my life, I have responded to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, to prayerfully push doors presented to me and see if they open. Testing this prompting through circumstances, and consulting with respected Christian family and friends, has led me to stand for election to General Synod.

If elected, I realise I may be challenged in ways I do not expect - physically, mentally and spiritually. However, in the past 60 years I have faced many challenges and believe that my experience of God's hand in my career, in my personal life and in various aspects of Christian ministry, as outlined in my election address, will help me to face new ones.

2. What do you believe the Church of England should prioritise over the next five years to support mission, Christian discipleship and the flourishing of parish and other worshipping communities?

I believe the Church of England should encourage, teach and prioritise prayer in every aspect of its work. Promoting resources for teaching children and adults to pray; encouraging free access to books and promoting small group prayer, days of prayer and regular prayer gatherings in churches and dioceses. The Pray, Grow, Serve initiative in Exeter Diocese and the Intercessory Prayer Group are encouraging models.

On the back of such prayer, I believe the Church needs to re-examine the role of parish priests whose ordination commission is to be "servants and shepherds among the people to whom they are sent". Nothing in the ordination service speaks of the burden of administration now laid upon them. I believe it is incumbent upon the Church to explore how this burden can be lifted.

Similarly Churchwardens, PCCs and Safeguarding Officers are increasingly encumbered with administration for which many are not equipped. This, and the training courses required in many aspects of the work, has resulted in the visible lack of volunteers coming forward. For the Church to flourish in its mission, this urgently and prayerfully needs to be addressed.

3. What should General Synod do to help the Church become safer, more accountable and more trusted, ensuring that national reforms work effectively in parishes, dioceses, and cathedrals?

A house built on sand will fall. A house divided against itself cannot stand.

Lack of accountability and trust gives birth to an unstable and unsafe organisation.

General Synod needs to be seen to be open and accountable, serving the Church with humility, and deeply rooted in Biblical teaching, in order to restore trust from within the Church. How often does

Synod pause in the midst heated debate, to pray for Jesus to be present and the Holy Spirit to lead and guide?

I find many, including those in positions of leadership, feel a disconnect and therefore lack of interest or trust in the proceedings of Deanery, Diocesan and General Synod.

I would love General Synod to rethink how it can listen to the concerns of local Churches through the process of synodical government..

When trust within the Church of England is restored, I believe it will become a strong, trustworthy and safe place.

4. How should the Church prioritise good intentional investment in mission and growth whilst also resourcing parish ministry in all its forms?

I wonder what this question means by “the Church”? Are we speaking about the people who make up the Church, the local Church PCC, the Diocesan Board of Finance, or the Church Commissioners? I believe that people who make up the Church should have the freedom to review the way their gift will be used, as they would assess any other charity. For many their first priority is to see their local parish church enabled to fulfil it’s mission to “make disciples and to teach them” all that Jesus taught. To know that a large percentage of their sacrificial giving is being dispersed outside their local area, by a central authority, without any visible idea of how their gift will make a difference, is not conducive to encouraging giving.

If local Churches (like many Free Churches) were allowed to do the prioritising: first to resource the ministry in their own parish, and then to choose to meet particular needs made known by their Deanery or Diocese, maybe giving would increase, and mission flourish.

5. General Synod must address issues on which faithful Christians hold deeply differing views. How would you contribute to honest debate, good disagreement and clear decision-making while helping the Church maintain its common life and mission?

I pray I would be able to contribute to testing debates with an awareness of my own shortcomings and the need to listen well. Prayerfully reviewing what I might say; asking God to give me grace to be “quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger” and to “live out the message” of the Gospel.