

Election Address on behalf of the candidature of John Haslam for election to the General Synod of the Church of England.

I am 62 years old and I have been worshipping within the Church of England for the majority of my life having become a Christian at the age of 14 through attending Sunday School at my parent's Church. The Church of England has a very broad range of styles and at one time or another I have worshipped regularly in a High, Middle of the road and Evangelical churches. The one that I currently worship in is Holy Trinity Church in Stalybridge.

Over the last 6 years I have been steadily getting more involved within the Church hierarchy, wanting to make a positive impact. I now feel it is the right time for me to take the next step and stand for election to the General Synod. I have been a member of my PCC for nearly 30 years and have filled, at one time or another, most of the important roles such as Secretary and Treasurer and other roles such as Electoral roll officer, welcoming team, prayer teams and tech teams for services as well as occasional preacher and small group leader. I was first elected to Deanery Synod 4 years ago and became Deanery Secretary 3 years ago. I have served with Churches of very differing backgrounds in this role to reach common goals. Additionally I have recently been elected to serve on my first Diocesan committee where I have started to make my voice and views heard. I have always been willing to listen to the viewpoints of others and, although wishing to air my own views on subjects that I am knowledgeable about, open to having my ideas changed in the light of good convincing arguments or relevant new information.

Over the last 2 years I have been attending and participating in many courses and conferences, some run by the Diocese, to try and understand where the traditions and teachings of the Church have arisen and to listen to different and/or more extensive viewpoints. I attended the last Lay conference, I participated in the taster day for the 'Living in Love and Faith' day, I have been involved in the 'Growing Good' pilot, been involved in discussions over Green issues with A Rocha and ECO Church groups, I have gone on courses run by the Ecclesiastical law society, Christians in Science, Share Jesus International, Ekklesia 2021, Jesus shaped People, and the Methodist conference Easter People. I have served at and attended several New Wine conferences, the Keswick bible week and Spring Harvest weeks and I am currently considering going on the next Foundations for Ministry Course.

My current passion as a Christian is to engender an excitement in everyone in reading the bible, understanding it and recognising its relevance and that of the

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Church in this current generation. A world where Science, liberal morals, a lack of Christian teaching in schools and a greater ethnic and religious mix is seemingly making it less and less important. The current queen was presented with a bible at her coronation, but will the next monarch? and the bible is no longer required for oaths in a court of law. The bible was once central in our Society we need to make sure it becomes as important again. As we continue to come out of the covid19 pandemic we have the opportunity of a lifetime to place the Church back at the forefront of our society. There is confusion, doubt and fear amongst all groups of society and people are looking for answers and reassurances for the future. I want to be part of the debates as to how we can best achieve such a reawakening which I believe is possible.

The bible is still very relevant for the world today but it was written in the 1st Century in Greek and Hebrew for a different culture to our own. It is not a 20th Century Western book but has often been interpreted as if it were. Some of the traditional teaching of the Church and its rituals need revisiting, updating and in some cases rejecting when the bible is read in its true context and language.

We don't need to change the bible or the teaching of Jesus for the Church to fit in but we do need to understand that at times our interpretations of the scripture have been dictated by tradition or culture or from society of long ago, ideas which now inhibit the message or prevent us from being relevant. Society has changed and we need a Church that welcomes all, is seen to be up to date with worldly matters yet still holding steadfastly to the actual teachings in the bible not dated thoughts passed on from previous generations. General Synod sets the agenda for the Church of England, it is beginning to change and I would like to be part of the discussion and part of the answer, so that we are not managing decline but preparing for and encouraging growth and relevance.

Having been a parishioner in many different churches of different styles, been active in many roles in the Church and having participated in many different courses and conferences on a myriad of subjects, I believe that I am an ideal candidate for election to the General Synod of the Church of England. I have a very broad background within the Church of England and up to date in many of the current debates that are currently taking place within the Church.

I therefore would ask for your support and vote.

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