



From The Revd Will Pearson-Gee

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GENERAL SYNOD 2021 - ELECTION ADDRESS

Who am I?

My name is Will Pearson-Gee. I'm 59, married to Lucia and have four children (two still at school).

- I am the Rector of Buckingham Benefice which comprises two parishes - a small rural one and one large market town (c15,000).
- I trained and did my curacy in Oxford before taking up my current appointment where I have been for over 11 happy and fulfilling years.
- I have served on the Oxford Diocesan Synod since 2018 and am being proposed by Revd Ros Roberts and seconded by Fr Ross Northing.

I was brought-up in a single-parent household and it wasn't until I lost my first wife and son in a car crash in 1996 that I started to explore the Christian faith becoming a committed Christian shortly after. This experience of loss and devastation and then having been restored and given new hope by Jesus has shaped my faith and made me who I am. It has planted a strong desire to share the good news of Jesus and His gospel - which was what saved me from despair and hopelessness - with as many other people as possible. It is what propelled me into ordained ministry.

I know from my own experience that what society needs more than anything else is the Gospel and I want to do whatever I can to help our church make it as easy as possible for everyone to hear it.

What Can I bring Synod?

I believe I can bring great energy and significant life experience to the crucial legislative work of General Synod. I have served in leadership roles all my adult life first in the Army for some 18 years (including several operational tours) then 4 years running a business. With 15 years of parish ministry under my belt I have a good feel for what makes our wonderful church tick and what might make it work even better.

Why am I standing?

Our beloved Church of England is at a decisive point in its history and if we are to reverse the decline of the Church's influence and attendance the next 5 years are going to be crucial. Of particular concern are the following issues:

- **Financial Stresses** – with declining attendance in many dioceses, coupled with the impact of the COVID pandemic, the Church nationally and at diocesan level is facing significant financial stress which may require reductions in expenditure, reductions in headcount, organisational change, etc. These are critical decisions and I would resist vigorously any hollowing out of our ‘front-line’ i.e. parish clergy, and instead look for saving in ‘head office’ posts.
- **Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM)** – this Measure is being reviewed following many complaints from clergy concerning the considerable stress that the present system generates due to vexatious complaints and the glacial speed, together with lack of transparency, with which many complaints are dealt with by dioceses. It is totally unacceptable that 45% of clergy going through a CDM have considered ending their lives. I want to see a root and branch overhaul.
- **Living in Love & Faith (LLF)** - I want to make sure that we as a national church engage fully with the LLF resources so any decisions that Synod are called upon to make are made after a thorough engagement with the resources and a comprehensive listening process.
- **Vision & Strategy** – this is a major national initiative being led by the Archbishop of York which needs very careful consideration. I am fully committed to the parish system as the bedrock of our national church and would resist firmly any moves that would do away with the parish system. I am also very keen to explore any missional proposals that can work with – as opposed against – the parish system.
- **The lives of the Pre-Born** – with 25% of pregnancies ending in abortion I believe that Christians need to speak out more clearly and vociferously against this.
- **Climate change** – this is another issue where the church needs to speak out with a more prophetic voice.

If I am called to serve on General Synod I will seek to represent my clergy brothers and sisters and commit to being available to my electors and to providing feedback to them. I am committed to navigating tricky discussions with grace and truth, seeking unity wherever possible and avoiding upset.

I very much hope that you might give me either your first or a high preference vote.

Thank you so much for reading this.



Revd Will Pearson-Gee