



Revd Dr Peter Nevins

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Address for 2026 Election to the General Synod House of Clergy

I have been blessed to serve Guildford Diocese for over 15 years in both lay and ordained capacities, six of them as Dorking Area Dean, and am a tutor at St. Martha's College. I have served on Diocesan Synod, the Vacancy-in-See Committee, and have been elected to the Crown Nomination Commission in search of our next Diocesan Bishop. Having been a Training Incumbent for self-described liberal-catholic, middle-of-the-road, and evangelical curates, I appreciate that these are not simply "camps" or "tribes." We are family members together in the household of God – the communion of saints in which we profess our belief, and whom I am honoured to serve.

This service and my doctoral research regarding rural ministry have allowed me to closely see parochial and diocesan opportunities and challenges, and their intersection with the broader church and its governance. The next quinquennium of General Synod will be consequential on the life of the church, its clergy, its parishes, and their inter-dependent well-being, for better or worse. Broadly, three key topics will be:

1. Safeguarding/Governance Reform

The approval of a new independent safeguarding body is a significant development, but its success for both survivors and our parishes depends upon its implementation. Effective, resource aware, and realistically implementable policies, procedures, and frameworks must support the Church's ministry rather than restrain it.

2. Human Sexuality/Marriage

LLF as a process has concluded. The new Relationships, Sexuality and Gender Working Group carries the weight of people's lives, convictions and consciences as well as the unity of the Church. The incoming Synod must do

better than managed disagreement with a view to 'the unity of the Spirit' and 'the bond of peace' among the communion of saints.

3. Long Term Sustainability – Diversity and Resource Allocation

Beyond being an ecclesial imperative, Synod must seriously interact with changing demographics for a viable Church of England now and into the future, as well as support for rural and urban priority area ministry. The spending plans approved last July are a start; this quinquennium must see it through wisely and well.

There are, of course, many other matters for General Synod to attend to. For instance, as a foster carer of a disabled child for the last nine years, I was delighted to hear of the PMM: GS 2452A – Support for Looked After Children and Care Experienced Adults, supported by our own Ruth Allan in a speech and unanimously passed in July. The work of General Synod ought to be the work of 'true religion' as St. James defines it: 'to look after orphans and widows in their distress...' Good ecclesial governance means so much more than attention to those things that make headlines.

Such governance requires a missional orientation with deep and wide biblical and theological apprehension that spans the traditions and churchmanship we cherish, rather than the adversarial, partisan, or ideological way we risk having become accustomed to. Should you perceive that I have such capacity, it would be an honour to serve you in the House of Clergy for the upcoming quinquennium of General Synod.

Blessings,



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