

General Synod 2026 – Hustings questions

*Answering is optional in all these questions. Enter your response below the questions.
Responses limited to 200 words per question*

Your Calling

1	In what ways do you think God has called you to this role?
	Calling is most often a collective discernment of God's people. Usually, it features some of at least three elements, and ideally all of them, and in no particular order of operation: the desire of the one(s) called, the prompts of a smaller number of others, and the affirmation of a larger body of others. I have experienced the prompts of others, as well as my own desire to serve God, His Church, and the Church of England in this way. Through the election process, I aim to subject this discernment you all, the larger body of others who would be able to either affirm or correct this sense of call. But why should I desire such a role or heed the prompts of others in this way? Because I think I would just as soon rather not. Like you, it is not as though I am not busy enough. However, I believe God has entrusted me with certain perspectives, skills, gifts, and experiences that would be useful to good synodical governance. Therefore, I believe I owe it the Church to offer myself in this way and let the people of God discern the call of God in this matter.
2	What is your personal hope for the Church of England?
	My personal hope for the CofE is that it would be a faithful, healthy, and fruitful expression and part of the Body of Christ in His world. I long to see our parishes churches flourishing as dynamic embassies of Christ's Kingdom, bringing its nearness to bear as can be understood across the New Testament and by the Anglican Five Marks of Mission. I long to see the Kingdom of Priests – the Lay Apostolate – that we often simply call “the laity” dynamically equipped and released towards God's mission in His world. I desire to see clergy sustainably and fruitfully deployed and supported to enable, equip, support, shepherd, and set free that missional work with adequate and effective structure, support, oversight, and accountability. Most plainly, my hope is that the CofE would grow and flourish as an agency of Kingdom transformation of people, communities, and creation by the power of the Holy Spirit and demonstrations and declarations of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the worshipping life, mission, and ministry of His Church. Good synodical governance must support this rather than hinder it.

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Church of England Structures

3	What do you consider the three top priorities of the Church of England over the next five years?
	My candidate's address touches on three topics that I think will likely be the business of General Synod: Governance Reform and Safeguarding, Human Sexuality and Marriage, and Long-Term Sustainability. However, what I would consider to be the top priorities for the Church of England would be: 1. Authentic Unity A Simpler, Humbler, and Bolder clarity about who we are and what we are about not only as the Church of England but a sharer in the Communion of Saints. 2. Making Disciples Simpler, Humbler and Bolder approaches to evangelism and discipleship. Can we make disciples of Jesus for free? If so, how? 3. Structural Reform <i>Simpler:</i> our structures and processes are too often over complex, and burdensome to the parishes they are meant to support <i>Humbler:</i> The humility to know we can't solve every problem and not every challenge has a systemic solution – no matter how much one might be demanded. <i>Bolder:</i> The boldness to know that sometimes less is more and the courage to prune.
4	What do you feel are the main safeguarding topics for discussion at the General Synod? How would you rate your own understanding of those topics?
	1. Care for Victims and Survivors. 2. Prevention of abuse and/or spurious accusation (itself a form of abuse) 3. Reliable, consistent, comprehensible, and effective implementability at a parochial level For many, if not most of us and our parishes, we could hardly be more affirming that safeguarding the vulnerable from abuse is an essential Gospel imperative. However, no matter the training, tools, or advice, navigating the policy and its requirements feels like treading a labyrinth built over a minefield during a hurricane in the dark. The legitimacy and weight of the responsibility combined with the overwhelm of the task is problematic to its effective execution. There are three things I believe I bring a strong understanding of in this respect. One is the Gospel imperative of safeguarding us all from abuse. Second is the complexity of both our policies and the contexts they must be implemented in. And finally, is the broader conceptual, social, and ecclesial framework within which this matter takes place.

General Synod 2026 – Hustings questions

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5	Do you recognise the key structure of the parish and priest as the bedrock of local ministry and mission in the Guildford Diocese and the Church of England?
	As mentioned in Q3, yes, I see the parish as foundational to the worshipping life, mission, and ministry of the Church. My doctoral research in my surrounding rural parishes lent tremendous insight, missionally, to the value of parish priests not just to congregants, but unbelieving non-church-attending parishioners as well. I believe the CofE national vision to be Simpler, Humbler, and Bolder can be well suited to creating leaner structures and fewer, more focused and intentional demands on parishes that release their time, attention, and resource toward local worship, mission, and ministry for the flourishing of our congregations and communities.
6	What is your view on maintaining a church in every parish when many are struggling financially?
	I found my recent doctoral research very insightful in this regard. Unbelieving non-church-attendees interviewees all agreed that real live worshipping congregations were necessary to the well-being for their communities, not just buildings. Insofar as it is financially responsible, and insofar as real live worshipping communities do or can exist, maintaining those church buildings seems wise to me. However, demographics and geography shift. As a nation peppered with castle ruins, we understand this. Where a hub of community once existed, it no longer does. And new communities exist where there previously weren't any. Worshipful and wise consideration and Simpler, Humbler and Bolder decision must also be taken to ensure that money and resource given in sacrificial worship is prudently and effectively put to maximal missional use.
7	Given the previous question, what thoughts or concerns do you have about the choice of central funding for limited focal projects or a model of funding towards the dioceses in support of all parishes?
	Proverbs 22:7 cautions that 'the borrower is slave to the lender.' Though grant money from central funds are not loans, they come with reasonable obligations and accountability related to governance, reporting, and outcomes. Whether that is associate to focal projects or channelled to broader distribution through diocesan mechanisms, I tend towards a cautious approach, not wanting too often or too critically to be beholden to the holders of purses and their expectations/dictates on our time, priorities, and activities. I believe there are Simpler, Humbler and Bolder approaches to parish mission that could be explored.
8	How would you solve the burden of expensive church building maintenance costs?
	One approach would be more centralised with its access to significant but also limited resource. However, such an approach also risks losing local determination. (see Q7) The approach more interested in local determination risks lesser resource.

General Synod 2026 – Hustings questions

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	Ultimately, before the solution is systematically considered or systematised, there must be a resolve to be Bolder. Bolder in the face of potential loss, the unknown, unintended consequences and more besides. We must also be Simpler. Simple isn't easy, it just isn't complicated and 'complexity is the enemy of execution.' Simpler processes must be identified and implemented to lighten this burden. We also must be Humbler. We might not be able to accomplish all that is demanded. Not everyone will be delighted or think the solutions are a great idea. We must have the humility to receive criticism in pursuit of the good that is achievable that also falls short of unrealistic perfection.
9	Should a candidate for General Synod who threatens to redirect parish share to the Ephesian Fund, withdraw their candidacy? Why or why not?
	No more or less than a candidate willing to offer "stand alone services" of PLF should withdraw their candidacy. Protest action giving strength of voice as truth is spoken to power should not disqualify a person from formal voice in the halls of power. That is precisely the nature of protest action. I would think that these are precisely the voices that should be invited into the conversation, rather than excluded from it. It is in the silencing of disagreement that the pull to strengthen voice becomes more necessary.

Doctrinal and Theological

10	In what ways does the doctrine of original sin (as defined in article 9) influence your wider theology and ethics?
	I believe Article IX is a contextual effort to bear witness to the faith we have received. That is a faith that recognises through experience, reason, tradition, and scripture that 'all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.' Each of us, in many and varied ways, are born into a disruption between ourselves and the goodness of God and His creative purpose and will for His creation. (see Q11) I would probably rather discuss how my wider ethics and theology accounts for, rather than is influenced by this doctrine. I would like to think that my theology and ethics are influenced by scripture, tradition, reason, and experience, and must <i>account for</i> a variety of different texts in scripture, traditions, reasonings, and experiences. Such accounting mitigates the risk of undue influence of one doctrine or another, one experience or another, one tradition or another, or any one line of reasoning or another. It facilitates not departing 'from this book of the law [the Word and will of God] to the right or to the left' and helps us to 'be careful to do everything written in it.'
11	Thomas Aquinas defined love as "to love anything is nothing else but to will good to that thing." (Summa Theologica 1.20.2, c.f. Romans 12:9). Do you agree with this definition? If so, how would you define the word <i>good</i> (particularly but not only moral

General Synod 2026 – Hustings questions

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	goodness), and practically what does it mean to will good when loving God or our neighbour?
	Jesus answered the rich young man, ‘Why do you call me good? Only God is good.’ Fundamentally, this good God also declared His creation, undisturbed by human sin as ‘good’ and ‘very good.’ I understand ‘good’ as that which is united to God, His purposes and will. When loving God, it is to identify Him, His character, and His will as ‘good’. To love my neighbour and will good to them, therefore, is to will their union to God through faith in Christ and to desire their conformity to His purposes and will. This, fundamentally, is also the basic understanding of <i>shalom</i> and the basis upon which “the good” is understood through scripture.

Mission and Ministry

12	What is the most significant change to the structure/strategy of the Church of England that will allow more people to come to know Jesus?
	To robustly insist: 1. That disciples of Jesus can be made for free – the question is ‘How?’ 2. God’s “Plan A” is His people, filled with His Spirit, ministering His Gospel in His world. 3. The lay apostolate – the kingdom of priests that we often simply call ‘the laity’ – committed, equipped, and released to God’s mission is and will be more potent than any course, conference, funding stream, or programme. Once this is pursued, our reasonable anxieties and preoccupations around systems, structures, and operations will lighten. Administrative and organisational demand will lessen, becoming more focused, intentional, and effective. And freedom for parishes to lean into living out God’s “Plan A”, while faithfully delivering essential administrative and organisational requirements will be more achievable. And, in three words, we will be Simpler, Humbler, and Bolder.
13	Why does it appear that other denominations are able to attract children and youth more than the Church of England?
	The contexts, dioceses, and parishes of the CofE are too many and varied to attempt simple causes. I might suggest that the organisational, financial, and social resilience of the CofE have allowed us to retain and continue parish ministries that lack children and youth more than other denominations. So the observation of other denominations proportionally attracting more children and youth might not be that they inherently attract more, but that CofE resilience mitigates against the risk of closure if children and youth are not being attracted. Recent research also suggests that attraction of children and youth is not necessarily denominationally, but theologically determined. Theologically evangelical

General Synod 2026 – Hustings questions

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	denominations and CofE parish churches (regardless of churchmanship) trend younger and more ethnically diverse.
14	Care for Creation is part of the Church's marks of mission. How do you feel about the net-zero targets for 2030?
	Creation Care means more than carbon emissions. Net Zero targets are worthy goals because air quality, climate impact, and global welfare are worthy goals. So are broader environmental impacts, fair labour practices, and global geo-political realities. While supportive of Net Zero goals, I am also concerned about the environmental, global welfare, and geo-political impacts of rare earth mineral mining and processing. I am concerned about things like production, recycling, and disposal of larger more powerful batteries. While younger than some, I am old enough to remember the apocalyptic fear in the 80's and 90's over rainforest destruction. Recycled paper was essential to be bought. Paper bags and packaging were to be abandoned in favour of the more hygienic, lighter weight, and rainforest saving technology. It would also reduce carbon emissions as its lighter weight would positively impact the amount of fuel burnt in transportation. This solution was plastic. One could tell similar stories about asbestos earlier in the 20th century. I am keenly aware of how today's environmental saviour can be tomorrow's environmental disaster. Net Zero is absolutely worth pursuing with conviction, wisdom, and multivariable consideration.
15	What are your thoughts on encouraging more people to enter the church as trainee ordinands?
	I am unclear on the question and what is meant by 'entering the church.' If it is meant: 1. People of no Christian faith deciding life as a Vicar is interesting with secure income and housing, we need vicars badly, and so we should welcome them into the Church so we have enough vicars: This is a very bad idea. 2. People from other denominational backgrounds entering the CofE as trainee ordinands: This is slightly more complex, and I am an example of such a person. Ultimately, at least two things are true: a. The CofE is very broad and many other denominational distinctives are already represented across the variety of CofE parishes. I am not sure "diluting a CofE identity" in theology or practice is at any greater risk in this scenario. Rather, that diversity is a hallmark feature of CofE identity. And other aspects of CofE life become appreciated with time and experience.

General Synod 2026 – Hustings questions

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	b. The current processes and safeguards set by the Ministry Development Team exist and continue to be improved to ensure that vocational discernment is authentic.
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Inclusivity

16	Are you aware of the Racial Justice Covenant in place for the Guildford Diocese, and can you make a statement about your recognition of the aim of the covenant and your support?
	Yes, I am aware of the Racial Justice Covenant, recognising and supporting its aim. My undergraduate degree in Biblical Studies/Theology was earned at a majority black (across administration, staff and student body) Bible College. It's mission was 'to train Christian leaders to reach a multi-ethnic urban world for Christ.' My first Master's Degree was at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School where I was part of the Mosaic Learning Community (now Mosaic Ministries). This was an intentionally populated formation group of students of diverse ethnic, racial, gender and socio-economic backgrounds in order to: 1. Discuss the effects of these on our approach to and practice of Biblical study/theology, worship, mission and ministry. 2. Model diverse and reconciled Christian community on campus 3. Advocate for greater diversity across administration, staff and curriculum at TEDS. I also have extensive experience of worship, mission and ministry internationally and cross-culturally. My small congregation at North Holmwood, though maybe 50 on a Sunday morning, features at least 5 nationalities and 7 ethnicities. I believe these strongly equip me to interact meaningfully and well with these matters.
17	How will you encourage a Church of England where each parish can foster a balanced and informed understanding of inclusivity, creating a culture where differing perspectives can be expressed openly, and where everyone feels genuinely heard, seen and valued?
	Grace, truth and boundaries. I like the word 'hospitality' for this. Hospitality is not entertaining. Entertaining is ensuring others have been catered to and had a good time. Hospitality is more honest. Hospitality is welcoming others as they are to myself as I am, and <i>vice versa</i>. Hospitality is where I am clear and kind about who I am and what I believe, as is the other, and both are welcome to be. Jesus Christ came 'full of grace and truth.' This is how I think of clarity and kindness. Hospitality also has boundaries. Where clarity and kindness (grace and truth/honesty) are absent, boundaries need enforcement to protect the bonds of

General Synod 2026 – Hustings questions

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	peace and a secure hospitality. Truth without grace is a bludgeon. Grace without truth is vapid. The absence of either is diabolical.
18	What do you think the Church of England needs to do differently if we are to engage those who have experienced the church to be abusive, homophobic or sexist?
	Most principally, I think we owe it to those who have had those experiences to be confident that the Church of England is actually <i>not</i> abusive, homophobic or sexist. Yes, there have been, are, and sadly will likely be abusers, homophobes and sexists who abuse the Church of England as a context within which to perpetrate their abuse, homophobia and sexism, even at the highest levels (highlighting the need for robust safeguarding practices). But those people must not be confused for the broader group of people or the institution that together are the Church of England. We all understand that Islam, or any other religion or denomination, cannot be flatly reduced to its worst representatives or those who abuse it as a pretext or platform for their evil practices. Why would we do that with the CofE? I think we must grow in our confidence that the Church of England, with all of its faults and flaws, is still a good, wholesome, welcoming and secure space in our nation – notable exceptions notwithstanding.
19	How do you think the Church of England can ensure LGBTQI+ people are fully welcomed, valued and able to flourish in the life of the Church?
	‘Ensure’ is a tricky word as it requires the control of things that are beyond rightful control – like other people’s perceptions and feelings, and what makes them feel what they feel. These are fundamental aspects of personal agency and must not be sought to be controlled. Such agency across human persons is too many and varied to ensure such things across them all. The compulsion to ‘ensure’ is the protein of authoritarianism and a toxin to agency. Echoing my answer to question 17, I think grace, truth and boundaries are paramount. Together, they make hospitality – the voluntary welcome of the other – possible.
20	Given that faithful Christians interpret Scripture differently on difficult and contested questions, how would you seek to maintain unity within diversity when they disagree?
	The affirmation of agency. A notion of unity cannot be held hostage with a list of demands. Furthermore, unity of the Church is not only a matter of unity in the Church of England. Every Sunday we affirm a Creedal Faith shared across time and space which includes our faith in the Communion of Saints, not only of the Church of England. The Proverb rhetorically asks, ‘Can two walk together unless they are agreed?’ It is an affirmation of the role of volition and agency in unity. We must be full of grace and truth which infers healthy boundaries. Those boundaries must be engaged in with the dignity of human agency.

General Synod 2026 – Hustings questions

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	My effort would be to be clear (truth/honesty), kind (gracious) and boundaried (respecting and protecting others' and my own agency). It is then up to us all whether or not we are agreed to walk together.
21	Do you believe that women and men are treated equally in our churches? If you were elected to the General Synod, what changes would you like to see which would support women's ministry?
	Matters and experience of equality and/or equity likely vary across our parishes and the human persons who populate them. Having had a female Training Incumbent (who is now a Bishop), having been a TI for three female Curates, and having had female apprentices, I have been blessed and learned many things. One of the most important has been that not every woman wants the same things or experiences equity/equality the same way, even in the same context. I think that I have learned that these women have desired to be known and treated as they and for who they are, rather than a category of being called 'woman'. I think the biggest change we could make is to recognise our female clergy, lay ministers, volunteers and parishioners as the image-bearing people they are rather than pigeon-holed as a category within a zeitgeist and dealt with ideologically.

Equal Marriage and Marriage Law

22	Marriage laws in the UK are being reformed, with the proposed change moving the system from licensed buildings to licensed officiants. Should clergy be permitted to conduct weddings in any dignified and safe location?
	This question carries a variety of other canonical and ecclesial considerations. I do not believe them to be insurmountable. In the same way that Pastoral Services like funerals and baptisms may be conducted away from the Church building, I believe it is worth investigating how to achieve similar situations for Wedding Services. I believe there are Simpler, Humbler, and Bolder ways in which we can imagine Pastoral Services toward maximal mission effect.
23	How do we resolve the apparent conflict between making all people feel included and welcome whilst holding firm to the Bible's and CofE's historic position on marriage, and so allow the CofE to move on from endless debates about sexuality?
	Again, others' feelings, I affirm, are theirs. While each of us has a reasonable duty to tend to others' feelings responsibly, the chase to secure others' feelings sometimes betrays hubris, insecurity or both. I believe that our ordination and lay ministry training ought to reasonably secure outcomes that include clergy and laity that mediate between the doctrines and practices of the Church (which can seem foolish or can be experienced as hurtful), and the world around us (which may or may not understand them), with a fulness of grace and truth. There is little end to the apparent conflict between the doctrines of the Church and not only the world around her, but

General Synod 2026 – Hustings questions

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	even within her! It might not be able to be resolved. But with grace, truth, and boundaries, I do think we can be healthy. Brene Brown is credited with saying ‘Clarity is kindness.’ I believe that as we are Simpler, Humbler, and Bolder in holding out our doctrines and practices, the world around us will appreciate the transparency and respect the integrity.
24	If you were an Incumbent, would you allow an assistant priest or curate in your parish to use the Prayers of Love and Faith if, in conscience, they felt able to do so?
	I am an Incumbent – of two independent parishes, not in a United Benefice. I have subjected these matters to shared discernment with PCC’s and priests in these parishes. Neither are in favour of the Prayers of Love and Faith being utilised in those parishes and I support that shared discernment. We aim to be Simple, Humble and Bold in this matter – full of grace and truth, with clear boundaries that accommodates true hospitality.
25	Would you support a member of your congregation who was in a same sex marriage being on your PCC, or leading worship or children’s/youth work in your church?
	There is much more to being on a PCC, or leading worship or children’s/youth work, than being in a same sex marriage or not. My parishes are committed to safeguarding and safer recruiting. We would welcome any and all who are a match to the role description, are prepared to deliver on its expectations and be subjected to safer recruitment procedures.