



GENERAL SYNOD ELECTIONS 2026
HUSTING ANSWERS
HOUSE OF LAITY

Question 1:

Do you support reviewing the Five Guiding Principles and ending discrimination against women? Do you affirm women's ministry in all roles, including lay ministry, deacon, priest, bishop, diocesan bishop and archbishop?

Candidate	Response
Piotr T. Baczyk-Bell	Yes, wholeheartedly. I affirm women's ministry in every role: lay ministry, deacon, priest, bishop, diocesan bishop and archbishop. The systemic exclusion women have faced in the Church has caused deep spiritual harm, and I believe it is a grievous sin. That women now serve at every level is a great sign of the Holy Spirit at work, and I rejoice in it. I have seen first-hand the painful reality the Five Guiding Principles create for women (priests, ordinands, as well as laity). It is a confused state of affairs, and an honest review would help order our ecclesial life far better. God calls all people, and a woman's call to ordained ministry lies in the same mystery of the soul as it would be for a man (to use binary language!). Therefore, the Church must discern, call and enable everyone equally. I am 100% committed to ending discrimination. In my view - as the Church - we cannot do one thing 'professionally' and another spiritually.
Cheryl Bartels	Scripture shows women in positions of leadership among God's people, including Deborah, who served as a prophet and judge over Israel. God has spoken through women as well as men. In Joel, God promises to pour out His Spirit upon all people so that "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy". Why, then, should any ministry be restricted to men? Women have long been the lifeblood of the Church, serving faithfully in countless roles and ministries which bring beauty and enrichment to the life of the Church. These ministries matter, but women should not be restricted to them. Women are children of God, bearers of His Spirit, and therefore may speak His Word, proclaim the Gospel, share their faith and exercise every ministry to which God calls them. I affirm women's ministry in every role of the Church, and I support reviewing the Five Guiding Principles where they result in discrimination.
Eve Bradshaw	I affirm women's ministry in all roles. I am delighted that my vocation as a Lay Minister has been enabled and supported by the hard work and decisions of those who have gone before me, and I will do what I can to support women's ministry and vocations for all who feel they are called.
Rebecca (Bex) Chapman	
Ben Cheeseman	
Katie Colahan	
Ethan Glackin-McColgan	I fully support reviewing the five guiding principles and fully affirm women's ministry in all roles in the Church of England.
Joseph Goswell	
Adrian Greenwood	
Dean Huang	
Jim Nurton	Yes I support a review to end discrimination at all levels. I affirm women's ministry in all lay and clerical roles and welcome the great contribution that women make to the church, including as priests, bishops and archbishop.

Mark Pickering	
Carter Pilcher	
Alberta Rosenior	
Catherine Sands	"The Five Guiding Principles were agreed when the Church of England decided that women could become bishops. They recognise that women can serve in all ordained roles, while also making space for those who, for theological reasons, hold a different view. They are important in helping the Church move forward but more than ten years on, I think it is right to review whether the principles are still serving the Church as intended. Any review should be honest, respectful and focussed on ensuring that everyone is able to flourish. I support women serving at every level of ministry, including as priests, bishops and archbishops, as throughout my life in the Church, I have seen the faith, wisdom, compassion and leadership that women bring to ministry. I believe ministry should be based on a person's calling, not their gender."
Ian Shaw	Yes
Gregory Smye-Rumsby	
Jon Stone	Yes. I support reviewing the Five Guiding Principles and ending discrimination against women. I fully affirm women in every role in the Church, including as deacons, priests, bishops, diocesan bishops and archbishops. The Principles seek to hold together two commitments: that every order of ministry is equally open to women, who should receive due respect and canonical obedience, and that those unable to receive women's ordained ministry should be enabled to flourish within the Church. I respect those theological differences, but a review should examine whether that balance works fairly in practice. Equality is not just about treating everyone in the same way; it may require specific action and additional support to overcome any disadvantages and provide genuinely equal opportunities, rights and recognition.
Hugo Summerson	I am opposed to discrimination of all sorts, and I affirm women's ministry in all roles because it is now well established.
Arjun Swarup	
Christopher Swift	
Alison Tomkins	I affirm women's ministry in all roles. I support reviewing the Five Guiding Principles, acknowledging the important role the Principles have played in helping Anglicans with different theological convictions to relate to each other within one church.
Paul Waddell	"I'll do the easy bit first. I affirm women's ministry at every level of the church, and was absolutely delighted when Sarah was made Archbishop of Canterbury. I would support a review of the Five Guiding Principles, but I would not be presupposing an outcome. I'm keen to maintain the big tent of the Church of England, so am reluctant to create an environment under which pushes people out. Having said that, I believe that Paul's call, in the first part of 1 Corinthians, is to unity, and separated structures don't look like unity to me. I'm also uncomfortable with a church where a woman who felt God's calling to minister in a particular way in her parish church was unable to follow her calling without upping sticks and moving. That feels in tension with Guiding Principal number 2, that ""The Church of England has reached a clear decision"" on women's ministry."
Grahame Woods	Yes. I am a firm supporter of enabling the full participation of women in all forms of ministry, for it is for God to decide who he calls to ministry and not us. Regardless of people's personal views, I have also been appalled by the actions of some male priests towards women priests and those who support women's ordained ministry, and will

	always push for a church where its ministers support each other regardless of their personal views.
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Question 2:	
Do you support the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy to bless people in a same sex relationship? Are you in support of authorizing stand-alone services for the blessing of same sex couples in the church?	
Candidate	Response
Piotr T. Baczyk-Bell	Yes, and yes. Frankly, it is ridiculous that we are still debating this. The Prayers of Love and Faith were commended after years of listening, and faithful same-sex couples in our parishes have waited long enough for the Church's blessing. Endless delay is not caution. We must stop hesitating and get on with it. I want the prayers to be used fully and freely, and the Synod should authorise stand-alone services without further delay, not least because the distinction between current provision and stand-alone services is largely symbolic. Isn't it wonderful that we, as the Church of England, can gather around a couple who have committed their lives to one another, and ask God's blessing on their love? Let us do so gladly, in full view, and without nonsensical apology.
Cheryl Bartels	I support same-sex couples being able to come to church for prayer and blessing. I understand the arguments against this; however, I would like the Church of England to come to a decision on what pastoral and liturgical models should be adopted for same-sex couples. As of February 2026, standalone Prayers of Love and Faith services are not currently authorised and would require full formal authorisation under canon law. I would like General Synod to consider other ecclesiastical models which allow blessings for same-sex couples, such as the Roman Catholic Church's Fiducia Supplicans. This could offer another way forward for same-sex couples seeking prayer and blessing within the Church. It is worth exploring whether a comparable Anglican approach could provide pastoral care and blessing while also taking seriously the theological concerns that remain within the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion.
Eve Bradshaw	Yes I do. I was a participant in the Living in Love and Faith working groups and have continued to advocate for LLF and been involved in the ongoing discussions at parish, Deanery and Diocesan Level. I believe everyone is made in the image of God and that if two people wish to marry in church I would support that.
Rebecca (Bex) Chapman	
Ben Cheeseman	
Katie Colahan	
Ethan Glackin-McColgan	I support the work that has been done by previous synod's to bring forward the prayers of love and faith liturgy. I am in support of these prayers and would like to see the authorizing of stand alone services for the blessings of same sex couples.
Joseph Goswell	
Adrian Greenwood	
Dean Huang	
Jim Nurton	Yes. I support the use of Prayers of Love and Faith. I would also support, and if elected I would work alongside others to introduce, stand-alone services for same-sex blessings. I have friends and family members who are currently discriminated against in this respect and I would like to see that discrimination end.
Mark Pickering	
Carter Pilcher	
Alberta Rosenior	

Catherine Sands	"I have worked with, are friends with, and worshipped alongside LGBTQ+ Christians whose faith, commitment and service to the Church have enriched the lives of those around them. I believe the Church should be a place where everyone knows they are welcomed, valued and loved by God. For that reason, I support the Prayers of Love and Faith and would be comfortable with same-sex couples being able to celebrate their commitment before God and receive the Church's blessing. At the same time, I recognise and respect that others hold different views, and I believe we should continue to listen to one another with grace and understanding."
Ian Shaw	Yes
Gregory Smye-Rumsby	
Jon Stone	Yes. I support the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith for same-sex couples and would support authorising stand-alone services. I see no meaningful issue with moving from prayers of blessing within another act of worship to a service in its own right. The purpose remains the same: to welcome the couple, acknowledge their love, give thanks for their relationship and ask for God's blessing. I recognise that others reach a different theological conclusion, but I believe same-sex couples should be able to come to their Church for all life events.
Hugo Summerson	God made us all in His image – male, female, gay, straight, black, white – and commanded us to love one another. "Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all." (Ephesians 3 v11). We all have demands of the Church; my concern is that the Church of England should continue to exist, which is why I am supporting Save the Parish. I think that every Christian in the land, no matter what their race or sexual orientation, should come together in worship of Almighty God and in spreading the Good News of the Gospel.
Arjun Swarup	
Christopher Swift	
Alison Tomkins	I support the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith. I am in support of authorizing stand-alone services for the blessing of same sex couples in the church.
Paul Waddell	Yes and yes. My voting record at General Synod supports this.
Grahame Woods	Yes, and I would go further and support the celebration of same-sex marriage in the church. The greatest commandment that Jesus left us with is to love, and I have never understood how two people of the same sex loving each other could be considered to be a sin or otherwise unworthy of God's blessing. I look forward to the day where we can join our American and Scottish brothers and sisters in the Anglican Communion and celebrate same sex marriage.

Question 3:	
Will you support a change in the canons to support same-sex marriage for Christians in the Church of England?	
Candidate	Response
Piotr T. Baczyk-Bell	Yes! My husband and I are married in the Anglican Communion. We longed to marry in our own parish church, but the Church of England would not allow it, so we married in the Episcopal Church. There we saw a church flourishing, made richer by welcoming married couples like us. It is possible. The canons were made for the Church, not the Church for the canons. Our church life and collective witness of ordinary Anglicans show clearly that the canons must change, so that every couple can marry in their own parish church.

	It is our duty as the established church.
Cheryl Bartels	I affirm that same-sex couples should enjoy the same dignity, legal recognition and protections as opposite-sex couples in civil marriage. The Church of England's doctrine of marriage understands marriage to be between a man and a woman. Its teaching and canonical position are significant and should not be changed lightly. I understand the tensions this question causes within the Church. Therefore, I support continued theological reflection, discussion and discernment on this question, rooted in prayer and attentive to Scripture, reason and tradition. Any proposed change to the canons should be considered carefully, with regard for doctrine and the pastoral realities faced across the whole Church and the wider Anglican Communion. I am open to the possibility of this canon changing in the future. If, through its proper processes, the Church reaches a new lawful canonical settlement on same-sex marriage, I will fully accept that decision, abide by it and work faithfully within it.
Eve Bradshaw	Yes. If I am lucky enough to be part of General Synod I would be honoured to be part of the conversations towards equality and equity within the Church of England.
Rebecca (Bex) Chapman	
Ben Cheeseman	
Katie Colahan	
Ethan Glackin-McColgan	Yes. I fully support further work being done on this matter. Great work has been done but further work and dialogue is needed. As a pioneer I'm have experience of working and ministering within conflicting views/opinions.
Joseph Goswell	
Adrian Greenwood	
Dean Huang	
Jim Nurton	I would personally support same-sex marriage in the Church in order that same-sex couples can participate in marriage to the same extent as heterosexual couples. However, I recognise that this would be a big step for the Church and there are many different perspectives that should be fully considered. If elected, I would listen to and work with people with a range of views to make progress on this issue in General Synod.
Mark Pickering	
Carter Pilcher	
Alberta Rosenior	
Catherine Sands	Yes, I would support a change. My views are shaped by both my faith and my career. I have cared for people and families from many different backgrounds, and I have seen how important love, commitment and support are in people's lives. Having been married for 36years, marriage is about a loving, faithful and lifelong commitment, and I believe same-sex couples should be able to make that commitment before God within the Church.
Ian Shaw	Yes
Gregory Smye-Rumsby	
Jon Stone	Yes. I would support changing the Canons to allow same-sex marriage. This is a deeply divisive issue, and people I know, love and respect hold different theological views. Those differences, and the potential consequences for the Church, should not be taken lightly. The Church needs to make space for disagreement wherever it reasonably can, but not at the expense of equality.
Hugo Summerson	No. What are our priorities? The Church of England is in precipitate decline. Some benefices have not had an incumbent for years. Clergy numbers are falling. There is a lack of confidence & trust in the church hierarchy, and erosion of traditional spirituality e.g. cathedrals catering for secular entertainment: St Paul's Cathedral doing a deal with

	a nightclub called Fabric; in 2024 Canterbury Cathedral held 'a rave in the nave' and Peterborough Cathedral an Ibiza-themed nightclub evening, defilements of these holy places. There is schism in the church: the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans announced in 2025 that it no longer recognised the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council, and the Primates Meeting as valid instruments of Communion. Its provinces represent about 45% of practising Anglicans, 38 million people. Are we not ashamed of such schism? Our main concern should be to proclaim Christ faithfully to the nations.
Arjun Swarup	
Christopher Swift	
Alison Tomkins	I support a change in the canons to support same-sex marriage for Christians in the Church of England. I would support measures enabling individual clergy to decide whether or not they wish to solemnise same sex marriages, in the same way that they can decide whether to marry divorced individuals.
Paul Waddell	Very much so. I'm a big fan of being married, my commitment before my God and my community to my wife has been really important to me. I think same-sex couples should be able to do the same. It's long overdue that LGBT+ Christians should be able to marry in their churches. I think equal marriage is a much better fit for our church than the prayers of love and faith.
Grahame Woods	Yes, and there is an urgent need to do so. Not only does the current stance cause significant hardship to priests in same-sex relationships, or those who feel called to a ministry they cannot progress given their sexual orientation, but our Church's stance on this is a key barrier between us and a generation who would otherwise come and hear the gospel. The process of reaching this conclusion has taken too long, caused too much pain, and significantly damaged our reputation in the eyes of the community we are supposed to be serving. The next General Synod needs to take proactive steps to address it.

Question 4:

If elected, how would you use your voice and vote to ensure that LGBTQ+ people and their families are treated with equal dignity and are able to flourish fully in the Church of England? If you believe there are areas of church life, ministry, marriage or the sacraments in which LGBTQ+ people should not participate on the same basis as heterosexual people, please explain which areas and why.

Candidate	Response
Piotr T. Baczyk-Bell	I would vote for every measure that brings full equality, and speak for it plainly: stand-alone services of blessing, changing the canons so same-sex couples can marry in church, and giving explicit permission for clergy to marry their same-sex partners without fear for their ministry and livelihood. I would also support reparative justice for Queer folk – our institution is obliged to respond to how for centuries the Church's teaching shaped how LGBTQIA+ people were treated and persecuted, and we must use our voice and resources to repair that harm. There is no area of church life, ministry, marriage or the sacraments in which LGBTQIA+ people should participate on a different basis. Baptismal dignity cannot mean anything less.
Cheryl Bartels	I would use my voice and votes to ensure that LGBTQ+ people and their families are treated with equal dignity, listened to and able to flourish within the Church. I do not believe anybody should be treated as a second-class Christian because of their sexuality.

	I also do not want clergy to be dismissed simply because they enter a same-sex civil marriage. On marriage itself, I have already set out my position regarding the Church's current doctrine and the need for continued theological reflection and proper canonical process. Outside of that question, I do not believe LGBTQ+ people should be excluded from worship, the sacraments, service or ministry simply because they are LGBTQ+.
Eve Bradshaw	I would use my voice and vote to support LGBTQ+ equality within the Church of England. I have been othered in various ways throughout my life, and I will work towards a church where there is no 'othering'. There are no areas of church life which should be offered to people in different ways, in my opinion.
Rebecca (Bex) Chapman	
Ben Cheeseman	
Katie Colahan	
Ethan Glackin-McColgan	As a gay man, married to my husband, I have had experiences and instances when I have been treated differently to heterosexual people. I believe LGBTQ+ people should be able to fully participate in all aspects of church life and ministry.
Joseph Goswell	
Adrian Greenwood	
Dean Huang	
Jim Nurton	I believe, and would like to see, LGBTQ+ people and their families welcomed and encouraged in all aspects of church life. I do not believe there are any areas where they should not participate on the same basis as heterosexual people. LGBTQ+ people bring experiences and insights that enrich the church and all its members. I also believe the church can do more to affirm the lives of LGBTQ+ people, including older people who face particular challenges (such as greater risk of loneliness, according to a recent report).
Mark Pickering	
Carter Pilcher	
Alberta Rosensor	
Catherine Sands	Personally, I don't believe LGBTQ+ people should be treated differently when it comes to church life, ministry, marriage or the sacraments. I believe everyone should have the same opportunity to respond to God's call and to play a full part in the life of the Church. Over the years, both through my nursing career and my life in the Church, I have met and worked alongside many LGBTQ+ people whose faith, compassion, commitment and service have made a real difference to the lives of others. I would like to see a Church where people are welcomed for who they are, where they know they are valued and loved by God, without feeling they are somehow 'less than' anyone else. I know that Christians hold different views on these issues and I respect that. My hope is that we can continue to walk together, listen to one another, and disagree with kindness where we need to, while never losing sight of our shared faith and calling.
Ian Shaw	Firstly, I believe LGBTQ+ people should automatically be welcome to participate in areas of church life, ministry, marriage or the sacraments i.e. there should be no discrimination. If I found that there were cases of discrimination, I would want to raise these within Deanery, Diocese and (hopefully) the General Synod.
Gregory Smye-Rumsby	
Jon Stone	LGBTQ+ people and their families should be welcomed, included and valued, and able to participate fully in every part of the Church. No one should be treated differently in church life, ministry, marriage or the sacraments because they are LGBTQ+, in a same-sex relationship or for any other reason. If elected, I would listen to people across the range of views, particularly LGBTQ+ Christians, those who hold different theological

	convictions and people directly affected by the decisions being considered. I would use my voice and vote to challenge discrimination and support full participation, while working carefully and respectfully to avoid deepening divisions unnecessarily.
Hugo Summerson	As St Paul says, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophecy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully." (Romans 12 vv 6-8). On top of that I sometimes think we are all in danger of forgetting the most important thing of all: "Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.'" (Matthew 22 vv 37-40) Surely we should go and do likewise.
Arjun Swarup	
Christopher Swift	
Alison Tomkins	I would support and argue for all measures to ensure that LGBTQ+ people and their families, including clergy, are treated with equal dignity and are able to flourish fully in the Church of England, for example by the blessing of same sex couples in the church and a change in the canons to support same-sex marriage.
Paul Waddell	Over the past five years on General Synod I have consistently used my voice to champion LGBTQ+ inclusion in the church. I was privileged to be given the chance to move the motion to remove the outdated and homophobic 'Issues in Human Sexuality' document from the discernment process for ordination. At home I run an explicitly LGBTQ+ affirming evangelical congregation. This isn't the only thing I care about, as my record attests, but it is very important to me.
Grahame Woods	I will always vote to ensure that LGBTQ+ people and their families are treated with equal dignity and able to participate fully in the body of the church. This includes the celebration of their marriage, the baptism of their children, and welcoming them into ministry if they feel so called. God has created us perfectly, and calls us to love one another which demands a fully inclusive church as a result. It is that simple.

Question 5:	
How do you understand Christ's call to inclusion in relation to women, LGBTQ+ people and others who have historically been excluded or marginalised, and what do you think lies behind resistance to that inclusion?	
Candidate	Response
Piotr T. Baczyk-Bell	Christ calls us not to tolerate people but to enter into a relationship with one another as siblings. And it is incredibly hard sometimes. Inclusion is not a list of separate causes. I believe that sexism, homophobia, racism, and exclusion by class or disability grow from the same root and must be healed together. Behind resistance to inclusion lies fear, and sometimes hatred – and sometimes a covert and hidden prejudice. As someone of Polish heritage, I find much of John Paul II's legacy deeply problematic. Yet, following his example, I cry with all who are excluded: Do not be afraid! Lord, send down your Holy Spirit and renew the face of our Church. This Church! (Psalm 104)
Cheryl Bartels	Scripture teaches us that there is no limit to God's grace, that God pours out His Spirit on all people, and that nothing can separate us from God's love. The Church is enriched by people from all different backgrounds, and exclusion can deprive the Church of gifts, ministry and witness, while also preventing people from seeking the relationship with God that is their inheritance.

	Resistance can come from differences in the interpretation of Scripture, tradition and doctrine. It can also arise from misunderstanding, fear, prejudice and failing to listen to experiences different from our own. These disagreements should be approached seriously and charitably. Most importantly, people should never be treated as less worthy of dignity, as we all belong within the Church. I also encourage people to get to know those from different backgrounds, because we are richer for knowing one another.
Eve Bradshaw	I think the Church of England has sadly often been on the wrong side of history on issues such as slavery, the marginalisation of people from different backgrounds, the historical lack of support for women's ministry, lack of recognition of widescale abuse of children and young people, and other excluded groups or shared identities. I am proud to be part of an Inclusive Church and part of Together for the Church of England. I will work towards full inclusion of women, LGBTQ+ people and others who have historically been excluded or marginalised. I'm not sure what lies behind resistance to that inclusion, other than fear?
Rebecca (Bex) Chapman	
Ben Cheeseman	
Katie Colahan	
Ethan Glackin-McColgan	Jesus states all people are worthy of the kingdom of God and expresses this many times in the gospels. Jesus' ministry was defined by radical inclusion of all types of people society had deemed unworthy. I think a lack of understating and expertise of being with LGBTQ+ people leads to resistance to inclusion.
Joseph Goswell	
Adrian Greenwood	
Dean Huang	
Jim Nurton	I think the call to inclusion, which we see most clearly in Galatians 3:28, is powerful and challenging, especially for those of us in positions of privilege. There are many reasons for that: one that I have becoming much more aware of in the past few years is unconscious bias arising from the failure to listen to and learn from people's lived experiences. I have seen that in particular in relation to racial justice.
Mark Pickering	
Carter Pilcher	
Alberta Rosenior	
Catherine Sands	I think reasons are often complex. Comes from a mixture of deeply held beliefs, personal experiences and the traditions people have grown up with. While I may not always share those views. my hope is that we can continue to listen well, show one another grace, and ensure that everyone feels valued and has a place within the Church.
Ian Shaw	My belief is quite simple - Christ welcomed all in all walks of life - he may have tailored his message to different audiences - but his approach was fundamentally inclusive.
Gregory Smye-Rumsby	
Jon Stone	For me, Christ's call to inclusion starts with love: love for everyone, welcoming the stranger and recognising the worth of every person. In Mark 5:25–34, Jesus allows himself to be interrupted by a woman who touches his cloak, listens to her and responds with compassion and dignity. We see the same openness throughout the Gospels in his encounters with people who were excluded, overlooked or judged by others. That challenges the Church to ensure people who have historically been marginalised are genuinely welcomed, included and valued. Resistance can come from different interpretations of Scripture and tradition, fear of change and sometimes prejudice. We will not all agree, but we are all part of God's family; we should talk openly, respect one another and remain united through our differences.

Hugo Summerson	Jesus Christ visited Phoenicia (Matthew 7 vv 24-30) and Samaria (John 4) and had meaningful encounters with women. He also healed ten lepers (Luke 17 vv 11-19). A great deal depends on how we define ourselves. As Christians we should define ourselves as Christian people with God-given responsibilities: "As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ... But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Peter 2 vv 4-5 and 9). It is clear: God wants us, all of us, the people of God, His special possession, to be His royal priests and to declare His praises.
Arjun Swarup	
Christopher Swift	
Alison Tomkins	I think Christ calls us to welcome and include all, with no exceptions based on gender, sexuality or any other characteristic. I think resistance may be based on some literal readings of scripture, rather than appreciating the historic context in which that scripture was written.
Paul Waddell	I think Jesus life, and large parts of scripture as whole, reveals how God loves humanity perfectly, with people's understanding lagging behind. The Bible shows God creating relationship with a person, then a couple, then a Holy family, then a people, then the World. Jesus through his life and parables shows us marginalised people, then shows us that they aren't outside God's love and community. I don't think God excludes anyone, that's on us. In the case of women, Jesus doesn't discriminate. You can see this from the fabulous relationship that Mary and Martha had with him. I think Luke 10 and John 11 illustrate deep friendships and respect. I remember that his first resurrection appearance, and the first commission to preach Christ raised from the dead, fell to a woman. For LGBT+ inclusion, I see the Centurion's servant, for those excluded for mental health, the story of Legion. For race, and many other issues, the Bible is filled with inclusion stories, but I'm out of space, sorry!
Grahame Woods	There has been unacceptable resistance to the inclusion of women, LGBTQ+ people, and others in the church that can only be explained by the established societal norms at the time. The church 100 years ago was an incredibly different being as to what it is now, and those who oppose this inclusion need to ensure that they are listening to what the spirit is saying to our church and celebrate and share in the radical love that Jesus gives us.

Question 6:

Can you give an example of where your understanding of God or the Church has deepened or changed through encounters with people whose lives or relationships do not fit your existing theological convictions?

Candidate	Response
Piotr T. Baczyk-Bell	As a queer person, I sometimes encounter people who would rather I were not there at all. Yet I believe we are one in Christ. I once debated with someone who disagreed profoundly about my life and marriage, and could not see its gifts. Yet week by week we knelt at the same Eucharistic Table, and I rejoiced that Christ holds us together even when we cannot agree. The Church includes me as well as those with whom I disagree; we are held together in our diversity. As we change the canons, a small minority may leave. They are still our siblings, free to choose. The work for justice must continue, and I have no doubt many will return. I pray we will run out to welcome them, like the prodigal son's father. True welcome, however, can never be at the expense of those the Church has excluded for centuries.
Cheryl Bartels	I would not say that one particular encounter completely changed my theological convictions, but my understanding of pastoral care has deepened through experience. I once sought friendship and Christian community, but instead of listening to what I was actually asking, people made assumptions about me and responded harshly. That experience taught me how easily people can be hurt when we stop listening to the person in front of us. I never want to treat others in the same way. It has shaped how I listen to people whose lives or relationships differ from my own convictions. People may live differently from me or hold theological convictions I do not share, but they remain my brothers and sisters in Christ. It reminded me that theological conviction and pastoral care are not opposites, and that our disagreements should still be marked by the fruits of the Spirit, especially love, patience, kindness, gentleness and self-control.
Eve Bradshaw	Through my Lay Reader training at St Augustine's Theological College, I met many people from a variety of Church of England denominations, and through them I have learnt a great deal about my own faith and its parameters. I undertook a placement as part of the Lay Reader training in a worship style different to my own, and am also part of the Southwark Going Deeper in Liturgy project, visiting a variety of church services across the Diocese and experience and support with feedback a variety of churches.
Rebecca (Bex) Chapman	
Ben Cheeseman	
Katie Colahan	
Ethan Glackin-McColgan	Coming from a Roman Catholic background, my understating of God and inclusion deepened the first time I watched a woman preside at the Eucharist. From that experience I understood God to be a God that does not discriminate.
Joseph Goswell	
Adrian Greenwood	
Dean Huang	
Jim Nurton	I recently attended a baptism and confirmation service in a church with a different tradition to my own. That included an immersion baptism, as well as powerful personal testimonies from individuals. That experience gave me a new perspective on understanding God's calling and how we respond to it.
Mark Pickering	
Carter Pilcher	
Alberta Rosenor	

Catherine Sands	My understanding of God and the Church has been shaped by my family, my faith and nearly forty years in nursing. I was brought up by parents with a strong Christian faith, which gave me a firm foundation. There have been times when that faith has been challenged, particularly as a paediatric emergency nurse caring for seriously ill and injured children, and later through my work with bereaved families in mortuary services. Those experiences did not weaken my faith, but they made me ask difficult questions and deepened my appreciation of compassion, grace and simply being present for people. I have also spent many years singing in church choirs with people from different backgrounds and viewpoints. We have not always agreed, but we have worshipped, served and learnt from one another. My faith has matured through those experiences and taught me the value of listening and understanding.
Ian Shaw	A very hard question to answer - I believe I am an open, welcoming person who people from equality/diversity strands find easy to talk to. I believe that my approach is a God-given talent - apologies if you think that is egotistical.
Gregory Smye-Rumsby	
Jon Stone	My understanding of God has deepened through recognising that his love is infinitely wider and less conditional than mine. One example was someone I had known since childhood entered a same-sex relationship - this did not sit comfortably with convictions I held at the time. However seeing a loving, committed relationship flourish challenged my assumptions and changed my view. Encounters with LGBTQ+ Christians, prayer and study changed my theological convictions. Working with disabled people taught me to focus on breaking down barriers rather than seeing the person as the problem and working in the mental health sector showed me the contribution of people with lived experience. I see the Church as one family where people should belong, worship and grow together despite differences in their lives, relationships or convictions. People who disagree with me are still people I love and respect, and are no less loved by God. We are called to treat one another with love and mutual respect.
Hugo Summerson	The convictions I had until 2006, when we started to attend Emmanuel Church in Wimbledon, included a view that the Bible was not particularly important. The churches we had attended until then had the usual Sunday readings but they had little effect on my daily life. At Emmanuel all that changed; the Bible was read and preached assiduously and I came to understand its crucial importance to Christians. "This Book has the power not only to inform but to reform and transform lives. Through its influence countless people have been given new strength, unerring purpose and assurance of eternal life. It is supernatural in origin, eternal in duration, divine in authorship, infallible in authority, inexhaustible in meaning, universal in readership, unique in revelation, personal in application and powerful in effect." (From the Introduction to my Bible, presented to me by the Gideons.) I am now convinced that the Bible is the foundation of our faith and that we neglect it at our peril.
Arjun Swarup	
Christopher Swift	
Alison Tomkins	I have participated in study and prayer groups with people from very different theological traditions from my own liberal catholic approach. They have provided me with new ways of understanding how God works in people's lives in dramatic and miraculous ways.
Paul Waddell	I was brought up in a conservative atheist family, and came to faith aged seventeen in a conservative evangelical setting. When I was in danger of being homeless at aged 18, I was rescued by a gay Christian. I must admit, the answers I gave to his questions about what I thought of his sexuality now make me shudder. Over time, the good Christian example he set, and a deeper exploring of faith and scripture, led me to a fully affirming position.

	On general synod, I have encountered people of different traditions, theologies and worldviews to mine. When I get to work together with them on issues on which we 'do' agree, I have found that a deep reminder of God's image in all of us. I find this challenging, as I struggle to reconcile the wonderful people I meet with theologies that exclude others, and I'm still working through that. But I do think unity in difference could be one big thing the church can offer today's society. I hope to be better at it!
Grahame Woods	In my Deanery there have been some rather strong divisions between more liberal catholic churches and conservative evangelical ones. When I was elected to my Deanery Synod I made the decision to visit as many of these churches as I could over a summer. What I found was not that there were clear boxes of churches who were wrong or right as we so often seem to hear, but that every church had a congregation who loved God and worshipping together in their own unique way. What I took from this experience is that all forms of parish ministry is vital, and that differing forms of worship must be celebrated and protected. The Church of England is, by design, a broad church, and the next General Synod must ensure it can stay this way.

Question 7:	
How do you communicate and consult with clergy and laity in our diocese before and after major General Synod debates?	
Candidate	Response
Piotr T. Baczyk-Bell	Listening matters, but I think dialogue is even more important. Not a one-way consultation, but an honest two-way conversation where we reason together, disagree well, and may both be changed. Before each group of sessions, I will share a short briefing on the key debates and welcome invitations from deanery synods, as well as host an open online conversation that anyone in the diocese can join. I will proactively seek out those voices the Church often overlooks. Afterwards, I will report back promptly - how I voted and why, what was decided, and what it means for our parishes. I would be more than happy to visit deaneries and church groups to continue the conversation in person. As a General Synod member represents the whole diocese, not only those who voted for them. Everyone should be able to reach me, and to be heard.
Cheryl Bartels	Before Synod, I would listen to both sides of the arguments and make notes on them before considering whether I need to rethink or develop my own conclusion on the matter. If elected, I would also set up opportunities for myself, as a General Synod representative, to speak with clergy and lay people across Southwark through emails, parish visits, short online meetings and written updates, so that people have an opportunity to tell me what they think before major debates and votes take place. After any major debates, I would explain what was discussed, what Synod decided, what arguments were raised and what the next steps are. I already do this for Deanery Synod, where I report back to the clergy and the PCC after things have been discussed within our deanery. I would want to continue that same approach at General Synod level, so that communication goes both ways.
Eve Bradshaw	Obviously if elected to General Synod this will be a learning curve for me, but I would imagine that I would follow similar processes and communication methods which I currently use, where I feed back from Diocesan Synod to Deanery Synod and from Deanery Synod to PCC and DCC as and when required.
Rebecca (Bex) Chapman	

Ben Cheeseman	
Katie Colahan	
Ethan Glackin-McColgan	As a member of our PCC, deanery synod, diocesan lay council, lay ministry selectors and ministry team; I communicate and consult at all levels of laity and clergy on the debates of general synod. I also reflect on synod debates with my spiritual director; particularly when they are about LGBTQ+ people.
Joseph Goswell	
Adrian Greenwood	
Dean Huang	
Jim Nurton	If elected, I will do my best to consult widely with clergy and lay members, including through listening to and reading diverse viewpoints, attending deanery and parish meetings and one-to-one meetings. I will also report regularly on General Synod meetings and developments. I recognise that there are a range of views on many of the issues before Synod and I will endeavour to consider and understand all perspectives before voting. During this campaign, I have already engaged directly with voters on several issues and I would try to be as available and approachable as possible as a member of General Synod.
Mark Pickering	
Carter Pilcher	
Alberta Rosenior	
Catherine Sands	Effective and transparent communication is one of the most important parts of the role. If elected, I would want to establish clear communication channels and, just as importantly, find out what works best for people e.g. via deanery meetings, parish visits, email or online forums. Before major debates, I would share key discussion points and actively seek views from clergy and laity through After, I would report back in plain English about what was discussed, how I voted and why. My aim would be to help people feel part of the conversation rather than hearing or not hearing about decisions after they have been made. Throughout my leadership career, I have learnt that good communication starts with listening. People may not always agree with the outcome, but they deserve to be informed, heard and respected.
Ian Shaw	Not done this to date re General Synod debates. However, my work as a Civil Servant and also since retirement in 2020 (Secretary of a local Residents' Association & dealing with local controversial issues) has involved many layers on communication and consultation dealing with organisations to make a difference but also to ensure voices are heard.
Gregory Smye-Rumsby	
Jon Stone	As I have not previously served on General Synod, I would plan to adopt an open and accessible approach from the outset. I see the role as representing the views and experiences of people across the diocese while exercising my own judgement. Before major debates, I would actively seek the views of clergy and laity, particularly those whose perspectives differ from mine and people directly affected. Afterwards, I would explain what happened and on significant issues, the reasoning behind any decisions. Existing parish, deanery and diocesan networks would help me gather views and share information, alongside being personally accessible to anyone who wants to raise an issue. This should be a genuine two-way conversation, not contact that begins only after decisions have been made.
Hugo Summerson	I am sure that there would be times when I needed advice on particular matters, so I would then talk to friends among the clergy and laity in my parish to get their views.

	But I think that extending such consultation to clergy and laity in the entire diocese might result in an avalanche of differing views which would make it extremely difficult for me to make up my mind! I am also sure that I would owe my judgment to both my electorate and to the clergy and laity in General Synod debates, so I would ask God to give me wise judgment.
Arjun Swarup	
Christopher Swift	
Alison Tomkins	I would intend to share material by email with the members of the deanery synods and invite questions and concerns. I would provide a summary of the debate and my own reflections while the debate is in progress.
Paul Wadell	During the last five years, each elected member has been tasked with reporting to a couple of deaneries with their takes on the last General Synod session's business. I provide written reports, and have visited several deaneries, where I have answered some excellent questions. I have always made myself available for contact and conversation. When taking decisions, I talk to others who I trust, some of whom disagree with me. I talk to other members of General Synod from multiple traditions.
Grahame Woods	Should I be elected to Synod it is my hope to email a thank you note to all Deanery Synod members and create a way for them to continue to hear from me. Following this, before every General Synod meeting I will be in touch to get people's views on key debates, provide my own initial thoughts, and if there is a wide difference of opinion hold an online session to discuss this with people. I am a firm believer that the people you elect to Synod are your representatives and not your delegates, and need to act like this as a result. Equally, after debates I will circulate my thoughts, how I voted, and invite feedback and further conversation.

Question 8:	
The National Church has increased clergy stipends by 10.7%, but parishes and dioceses have to cover the extra cost. This could put pressure on local churches and lead to fewer clergy posts. As a General Synod member, how would you make sure the National Church pays for future increases itself, rather than passing the cost on to local churches?	
Candidate	Response
Piotr T. Baczyk-Bell	Our clergy deserve a fair stipend, and I welcome the increase. But a rise decided nationally and paid for locally is not a fair settlement. Many parishes are already struggling, and this cost cannot simply be absorbed by them without losing posts, and with them, ministry and mission. This must be part of a wider conversation about how we resource mission. The national Church holds significant central funds, and more of that money needs to be released to sustain parish ministry, mission and our buildings, not only through targeted projects. On Synod, I would press for future stipend increases to be funded, or substantially supported, from the centre, and for full transparency about how national funds are allocated. The parish is where the Church's mission is lived out every day, and it must be resourced accordingly.
Cheryl Bartels	If elected to General Synod, I would use my voice and vote to fight for fair pay for clergy. Stipends should keep pace with living costs, and increases should not fall unfairly on parishes already under financial pressure. I support a weighted funding model based on local capacity. Where parishes and dioceses can meet the full cost while sustaining buildings and ministry, they should do

	so. Where they cannot, the National Church should top up funding so clergy receive a fair stipend without posts being cut or congregations carrying unsustainable pressure. Self-supporting ministry is a valuable vocation, but it should not become an expectation or a workaround for underfunding. Clergy already carry demanding ministries, and requiring another income stream can divide the time and attention they give to parish life. If our funding model drives clergy from ministry, it weakens the Church's witness. We must fund that ministry properly.
Eve Bradshaw	I would be interested to know more about the detailed finances behind these conversations and would work with colleagues to ascertain the pros and cons of financial decisions between the National Church and parishes and dioceses. I have been involved in this year's Parish Support Fund discussions and am aware of the financial pressures on Southwark Diocese and I will do my best to represent those when required.
Rebecca (Bex) Chapman	
Ben Cheeseman	
Katie Colahan	
Ethan Glackin-McColgan	I fully support paying our clergy properly, but national decisions should come with national financial responsibility. If the National Church increases clergy stipends, I would argue that the additional cost should not simply be passed down to already stretched dioceses and parishes. I would push for a national stipend fund, using national resources where necessary, alongside proper financial modelling before future increases are agreed. We also need to understand the impact on clergy numbers and protect posts where possible.
Joseph Goswell	
Adrian Greenwood	
Dean Huang	
Jim Nurton	I believe the next General Synod should have a full and honest discussion about funding, in the context of the cost of living, the burden on parishes and dioceses, and how funding should be targeted. The overriding priority should be to maintain and invest in parish ministry to ensure that the Church continues to be visible and relevant in every part of the country, including in deprived, marginalised and under-resourced communities. I would support efforts to look at how central funds are allocated to ensure that they are helping to deliver these goals in every parish.
Mark Pickering	
Carter Pilcher	
Alberta Rosenior	
Catherine Sands	I understand why clergy stipends need to keep pace with the cost of living, but I am also conscious of the pressures many parishes are facing. Having served on PCCs, I know how carefully local churches manage their finances and how difficult it can be when additional costs are passed down without additional support. If elected, I would be prepared to ask challenging questions - if the National Church believes a pay increase is right, it should also be clear about how it will be funded and the impact on dioceses and parishes. I would support greater use of national funding, including Church Commissioners' resources, to help meet nationally agreed increases rather than simply passing the cost on through parish share. My priority would be protecting parish ministry and ensuring local churches have the clergy and resources they need to serve their communities.
Ian Shaw	Not knowing the details of the national church finances, I would work on the basis that as local churches face more financial strains, more of the pressures should be borne by

	the national Church. I would certainly press for scrutiny on the national church budgets and would be willing to use my forensic brain accordingly,
Gregory Smye-Rumsby	
Jon Stone	Supporting clergy properly is important, but national decisions on stipends must take account of the financial consequences for dioceses and parishes. I have over 20 years' experience of finance, governance, budgeting and risk across charities and non-profits, including advising boards and helping organisations plan for long-term sustainability. I have also taken an active interest in the pressures facing our diocese, including attending a recent presentation on the Parish Support Fund, sharing what I learnt with our PCC and supporting our Treasurer and PCC in considering financial issues. As a Synod member, I would test the affordability and funding implications of future increases before decisions are made and press the National Church to provide appropriate support where national decisions create significant local costs. Clergy should be supported fairly without undermining the sustainability of dioceses, parishes or clergy posts.
Hugo Summerson	A good question! In 2024 the net contribution to parochial ministry from the historic endowments of the Church was £85 million out of a possible £653 million. Meanwhile £154 million goes on diocesan overheads, a figure that has grown by twenty-nine per cent in three years, and 980 clergy now work in diocesan and national headquarters. Dioceses employ on average one member of staff for every 3.5 parochial clergy, against a charity sector average of one to eight. I am standing under the auspices of Save the Parish, which will campaign for a disciplined staffing structure moving towards that ratio of one to eight by 2031, so that the money parishes give returns to the mission of the parish. I would also say (personally) that Project Spire is a complete nonsense, and the enormous sums it talks blithely about giving in "reparations" (to whom?) should instead be used to support our parishes and clergy.
Arjun Swarup	
Christopher Swift	
Alison Tomkins	The National Church has to carefully balance the needs of the church today with the future. In the short term, contributing to the increase in clergy stipends (and reducing its reserves to do this) may be necessary to ensure the longer term growth of the church. This should sit alongside an expectation of sacrificial giving by individual church members, to support their own clergy and also those in less wealthy areas.
Paul Waddell	The National Church was right to increase clergy stipends, as many of our clergy live in challenging circumstances. I think that there is a good debate to be had around funding these costs. A big part of the answer will be strong, healthy and growing parishes. Growth will require both national and diocesan funding. We have to have big conversations around SMMIB funding, that often favours particular traditions ahead of others, and whether the church commissioners could be asked to provide more to parishes generally. In General Synod last year, I was happy to vote to support the motion to redirect a portion of the Church Commissioners' endowment to Diocesan Stipend Funds. This would have directly affected the outcomes of the question being asked here. I'm only a bit cautious in some of my response because this won't always be the answer, and growth in the number of Christians in our churches, and a growth in parish giving, will be required for a sustainable church.
Grahame Woods	It is absolutely vital that the money that the National Church has is being put towards supporting front-line ministry first before anything else. However, it is right that parishes contribute to their own running costs (and indeed the running costs of other churches in our diocese where they can afford it). While the National Church holds managed vast wealth, this may need to last us millennia and needs to be carefully managed as a result. If elected, I will commit to being in the room for debates and

	votes on this topic and to be resolute in ensuring that the National Church spends and invests its money with a 'parish first' mentality.
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Question 9:

Does your church pay directly into the diocese parish support fund or do you limit who can be supported by your giving via an arrangement such as the Ephesian fund where only those churches who agree with your theological position on sexuality can be supported?

Candidate	Response
Piotr T. Baczyk-Bell	My church pays directly into the diocesan parish support fund.
Cheryl Bartels	My church is currently working on making payments to the diocesan Parish Support Fund. I personally find arrangements such as the Ephesian Fund to be deeply upsetting. We are one Church. We are all part of one body (1 Cor 12:27). We share one faith and one belief in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. All churches should be contributing to this one fund, because stronger parishes sustain weaker ones. Ultimately, the witness of the Church and the support of the Church are necessary and widespread across all parishes. I object to making financial support conditional on another parish adopting my theological position on sexuality. Christians are welcome, especially within the via media of Anglicanism, to disagree profoundly with one another, but we remain part of the same body of Christ. We still say the Lord's Prayer together. We still take Communion, and we should still be able to bear one another's financial burdens within the Church we share.
Eve Bradshaw	My church and my parish pay directly into the Diocese Parish Support Fund.
Rebecca (Bex) Chapman	
Ben Cheeseman	
Katie Colahan	
Ethan Glackin-McColgan	Yes my church pays directly into the parish support fund.
Joseph Goswell	
Adrian Greenwood	
Dean Huang	
Jim Nurton	My parish church, St John's East Dulwich, pays directly into the diocese parish support fund. As a PCC member, I have consistently voted to increase our parish pledge in line with, or above, inflation. I'm proud that St John's is a net giver, and that we support the ministry of other parishes across the diocese.
Mark Pickering	
Carter Pilcher	
Alberta Rosenior	
Catherine Sands	Our church pays into the Parish Support Fund, sharing responsibility to support ministry and mission across the whole diocese. Having served on PCCs, I know how carefully churches manage their finances and how important it is that people understand where their giving goes. I value being part of a wider Church family and believe we are at our best when we work together to make sure every parish has the support it needs to serve its community.
Ian Shaw	Yes. For 2027 we increased our PSF pledge, with no conditions.
Gregory Smye-Rumsby	
Jon Stone	My church gives directly to the Diocese of Southwark's Parish Support Fund, and I agree with that approach. Our giving should not be restricted only to churches that share our theological position. We are part of one Church family and, while there will be significant issues on which we disagree, our shared contributions should sustain ministry and mission across the diocese. Remaining in relationship, helping one another and respecting our differences are part of what it means to be one Church.
Hugo Summerson	Our church pays into the diocese parish support fund direct.
Arjun Swarup	

Christopher Swift	
Alison Tomkins	Yes, it pays directly into the diocese parish support fund.
Paul Waddell	I attend an evangelical church that contributes to the normal diocesan parish support fund. I can't speak for everyone, but I don't think that segregating ourselves from other churches in the diocese would either occur to us or be something we'd think was in the spirit of Christian unity.
Grahame Woods	My church pays directly into the diocese parish support fund. While I do not support the Ephesians Fund as a principle, what I struggle with more is when Parishes provide their Parish Support Fund payment to their Ephesians fund to limit who it can go to, they are perfectly happy to receive funding from the wider Diocese and, in turn, parishes that have a different theological position on sexuality to them. I am not saying that the rules on this should be changed as I don't want to see a single church close unnecessarily, but I would invite the priests and PCCs of these churches to reconsider their position.