

JOHN CASTER

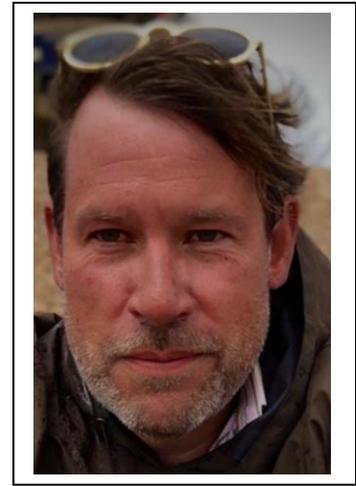
Candidate for General Synod

Proposer: Caroline Glass

(Vicar of St Luke's, Tunbridge Wells)

Seconder: Douglas Wren

(Rector of Speldhurst with Groombridge & Ashurst)



Dear Elector,

In the last two years, the world has faced many challenges which we never quite anticipated, and the church has not been immune from these challenges. As we move forward from the harshest trials of a global pandemic, the General Synod of the Church of England will bear great responsibility in resourcing and supporting the Church's mission. I am standing for General Synod because I believe that I can give a meaningful voice for our diocese in the next quinquennium.

ABOUT ME

My journey to this point has taken me through a variety of places and circumstances. I was brought up in a small, rural town in Texas. My family were regular churchgoers, and I was confirmed in the Episcopal (Anglican) Church. After taking a degree in History and Economics, I began to consider and discern a vocation to ministry in the church. I served as a Parish Administrator in a large, urban church in central Houston, Texas, and gained experience not only in the practical aspects of the running of churches, but also worked daily with that church's full time homeless ministry.

As I was still in my twenties, I saw an opportunity to spend some time working in the United Kingdom in a church in a lay capacity. This not only allowed me to broaden my experience, but also gave me the opportunity to prayerfully consider my vocation. Four and a half years later, I trained for ordination in Oxford as a Diocese of London ordinand.

I served my title in an outer North London parish, which was a sprawling and heavily populated Urban Priority Area. In this time, I saw the great value and role of the Church as a source of genuine community in a very diverse and transient population.

I carried that understanding with me to my next appointment as Team Vicar of St Mary's, Somers Town, in the Parish of Old St Pancras in central London. In a parish whose history was marked by its key role in the development of the concept of Housing Associations, I was able to see that support of, and advocacy for, our communities is a key responsibility of the Church.

Nine years ago, I was called to St Barnabas, Tunbridge Wells, where I serve as Vicar. During that time, I have striven to serve our parish through our church and school, seeing our role as making Christ present for all who live in our community.

I see Church of England schools as one of our greatest assets, and an aspect of our wider Christian mission which must be supported and recognised for their value in our work with our nation's youth.

At every step of the way, I have seen the fundamental responsibility of the Church is proclamation of the Good News in prayer, worship, word, and deed.

WHY AM I STANDING?

Throughout my service in the church, I have valued the role of the church in serving our various parish communities. This understanding of the widely cast net must not be lost in the aftermath of a global pandemic, and I feel I can make a meaningful and heartfelt contribution to those considerations in General Synod over the next five years. To that discussion I bring:

- A deep commitment to the Christian faith and an ethic to proclaim and share that faith.
- Twenty-five years of service in the church, in lay and ordained capacities.
- Breadth of experience in a variety of contexts, including Urban Priority Areas.
- Significant experience from serving on three school governing bodies (chairing two) and service on the Rochester Diocesan Board of Education.
- Experience working with homeless shelters and homeless advocacy groups.
- Work, through London Citizens, to advocate for social housing reform.

MY PRINCIPLES

We are facing very challenging times for the Church of England. These times are not just the result of a global pandemic, but that factor has certainly forced a discussion about a variety of issues which will have significant impact, particularly at the grassroots level of our mission, i.e. our respective parishes.

I believe that the priority of the church must be the facilitation of the proclamation of the Good News to every person in this land. We are a church with many contexts and traditions, and it is quite clear that there will be a variety of discussions, particularly over Living in Love and Faith, which will require careful consideration rooted in a spirit of Christian love.

I believe that, if our first priority as a body is making Jesus present in Word and Sacrament for the people we serve, we can effectively navigate the waters ahead as one body in Christ.

I appreciate your consideration and would be grateful for your support for General Synod. I thank Caroline Glass and Douglas Wren for proposing and seconding me.

If you think I would be an effective representative from the Rochester Diocese, please give me your first vote or a high preference vote.

Please pray for me and for all who are standing for General Synod.

Thank you for taking the time to read this address,

John Caster