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**Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

### **What is happening in the Church?**

The next five years will in many ways shape the future of the Church of England. The General Synod we elect now will debate multi-faith Britain, human sexuality, young people and schools mission, and climate change. The Reform and Renewal programme will also present significant challenges to our Diocese, along with some opportunities to look at new ways of joining in with God's mission in Tyneside and Northumberland.

I believe strongly in our commitment to serve every person in every parish and to be an engaged Christian presence in every community as part of God's mission to restore all things in Christ. There will be many challenges ahead for the parish system, and it's important that people in our part of the world, so often an afterthought in national policy making for both church and state, have their voices heard in Synod, to declare what God has been doing in our Diocese.

### **So what should we do?**

Our work within our communities and schools, serving poor and rich alike, drawing together all people of good will to share in mission and ministry, is one of our strengths. Newcastle has not traditionally operated a 'top-down' model of Church, but has allowed a little creative chaos as we seek to find the best way to proclaim the Gospel afresh in each place and in each generation.

There is a lot to be thankful for and a lot that we have to offer the Church of England, if we are confident enough to share our good news stories and to be bold about our determination to renew and strengthen the parish system. In Newcastle Diocese I believe that we best live out our faith in the everyday life and worship of our churches and communities, in being a voice for the voiceless of our region, in proclaiming hope through the love of God in even the most difficult of circumstances, and in working together for the good of all. These are all part of an evangelism which involves showing people how God is at work and inviting them to "come and see" Jesus Christ who is at the centre of it all.

To do this we need as a Church to fulfill the very different needs of rural, urban and suburban ministry. We need a strong commitment to serving the poorest parishes without neglecting wealthier communities with their often different challenges. We need urgently to commit to schools, youth and children's ministry as a central part of the church's activity, and we need to work together to find new ways of financing the work of Dioceses to support these commitments for the future, in a way which stops money becoming our biggest worry.

## **So why am I standing for General Synod?**

Before ordination I served the church in a number of roles from Deanery Standing Committee and Lay Clerk to Cathedral Development Officer, and experienced a range of different church, cathedral and college settings. Over the past five years I have been lucky enough to serve in the Diocese where I grew up, first in Morpeth and more recently in the very different context of Shiremoor.

I have been committed to reaching out in the parishes I have been part of to engage the whole community, and I think that this should remain a priority for the Diocese and for the Church of England as a whole, both through parochial ministry and through chaplaincy.

I am passionate about the Gospel and about our Church, valuing both traditional worship and the need to discern what the Holy Spirit might be calling us to in this generation. I have been very active in youth and schools development and want to see us better support community schools in teaching about Christianity and in sharing the faith.

Heavily engaged in civic ministry and inter-faith dialogue, I have seen how growth and flourishing are possible both in our churches and in our parishes when we really *are* “generous, engaged and open” even where money and other resources are tight.

I have extensive experience of finance and management structures as a senior project manager in industry, and have been an activist and advocate for community and church organisations for many years. I believe that I would be able as a result to articulate the things that give us strong foundations and on which we should build, as well as looking at the challenges ahead with hope and realism as we face the future.

If elected I would work hard for the voice of Newcastle Diocese to be heard at General Synod, and for the strengthening of mutual support and interdependence to be a principle for financing the future ministry of the Church.

I would defend the importance of the parish system and work with others to make sure that our presence in every community always remains “viable” even if the Diocese and the wider Church will have to find new ways of resourcing this.

I would also work towards creating a church which is generous, welcoming, inclusive and open, where everyone is able to fully participate in the membership and leadership of the church, regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, wealth, sexual orientation or disability.

I hope therefore that you will vote for me in the upcoming election to General Synod, and I welcome discussion with you on the priorities which we need to address; please get in touch by phone or email if you'd like to talk about any of the issues.

With best wishes,



Tony Curtis