

General Synod election address from Revd Bonnie Evans-Hills

The command to Love – God and neighbour – is accompanied by the story of the Good Samaritan as example of how that love should be lived out. It is established institution, in the form of the priest, which passed by the vulnerable, the wounded, on the road, unwilling to engage with their suffering. Our church is currently tasked with the challenge of relating to where people are at and what is important to them, to be the loving neighbour. It is a daunting but necessary task, one which necessitates courage to stand up for the marginalised and to love those considered loveless. This is what we do best, and where we find our greatest spiritual rewards.

General Synod is tasked with the governance of the church, and through that governance in guiding our church toward the Love God has called us to, a Love that calls to healing, calls us to be peace-makers amid the chaos of poverty, violence and fear. The challenge facing this coming synod will be to get across that call to wider society, to demonstrate our relevance through dynamic Love, in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, housing the homeless, visiting those in prison or sick. This involves working toward social justice and reconciliation, founded on strong prayer life, will enable us as a church to move from irrelevance to relevance and to form ourselves as the spiritual hearth and heart of our nation.

So why should you vote for me? This is the point at which I gather I am supposed to blow my own trumpet and seek your vote in this election. This feels at once arrogant, but is also deeply humbling. I am seeking to be your servant, and this is what I have to offer:

I am new to the diocese and many of you may not know me, coming only last year, first as Diocesan Inter Faith Adviser, and now also priest in charge of the Parish of Kimpton w Ayot St Lawrence. I have had experience with parishes in the inner city, suburban and now in rural ministry.

Aside from this, the following bio is what I share when asked to participate in wider events: ...having considerable experience in inter-religious dialogue, focusing in particular on dialogue with Shi'a Islam following a period of three years study in Qum, Iran. I took part in a theological exchange at al-Azha University in Cairo for the Anglican Communion's al-Azhar Dialogue. Formerly Counsellor on Inter Faith Relations to the Bishop of Chichester and Interfaith Adviser to the Bishop of Leicester, I also serve on the national Presence & Engagement Task Group, resourcing multi-faith parishes, and work occasionally with the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

I have recently been invited by the UN to a regional (European) consultation on ending genocide, have had training in reconciliation and participated in peace-building exercises for young people surrounding conflict in Israel-Palestine. I regularly attend sessions in the House of Lords and other venues with regard to preventing extremism, tensions in Syria, Iraq and Iran, and gender issues.

I hope this demonstrates an ability to deal with difficult topics and a willingness to speak out on important issues, as well as a rigorous attitude to fully exploring all aspects of difficult subjects.

My blog is at: <https://bonnieevanshills.wordpress.com/>

I welcome further questions by e-mail: bonnie.evans-hills@hotmail.co.uk

With much regard and blessing,
your servant,
Revd Bonnie Evans-Hills