

Dr Jacob Kurien

Election Address for General Synod of the Church of England 2021.

Proposed by Canon Peter Adams (Deanery of Luton) and seconded by Canon Richard Osborn (Deanery of Barnet).

Towards the end of the first triennium of my service on the Diocesan Synod as a lay member, the General Synod (GS) election was announced with active publicity and encouragement for people to stand for the election. A friendly nudge led me to give this further thought, leading to conversations with some current members about the work of the Synod and also to read and gain a better understanding of General Synod.

The four strands of work to discern the shape, life and activity of the Church of England going into the 2020's under the banner "The Emerging Church of England" struck a resonant chord with me and a strong call to be a part of this shared vision – to share what God has done for us and continues to do through the Holy Spirit – with simpler national governance structures and processes that are current and well researched.

We are at the cusp of what appears to me as the long awaited, joined up, structured change that will enable all churches to flourish in the post Covid 2020's, leading to transformation and fulfilment of our existential purpose – to spread the Word of God to everyone. It will be my great privilege and honour to represent our diocese and its deaneries at the Synod if elected.

Who am I, what have I done and why should you consider me?

It is very likely that many will not know me as I am relatively 'new on the block' and my parish is tucked far away at the southernmost tip of the diocesan boundary. I grew up in Tanzania, went to university and medical school in South India where I trained as a medical doctor and then practised medicine in the UK. I have been pretty settled in High Barnet from 1990 where I retrained to become a GP from previous hospital practice. I am married and we have a son and two grandchildren aged 4 and 8 who also live in Barnet. We have worshipped at St John the Baptist Church in Chipping Barnet from 1990. My parents were originally from the Orthodox tradition in South India but worshipped in the Anglican church in Tanzania.

Following retirement from General Practice, I served 5 years as a churchwarden at St John the Baptist Church in Chipping Barnet leading us through a long vacancy, served as a trustee on three local charities and as vice-chair of the DCC and PCC in turns within our Team Ministry. I also serve as the PCC representative at Churches Together for Barnet.

I have served and continue to serve as a member of the Diocesan Synod, the Bishop's council, the Board of Patronage, the Racial Justice and Action Group (formerly the DMEAC) and am a member of the Bishops See Committee. Through the Bishop's council I have served on 2 election Appeal Panels and on the Dean's Appointment Panel.

I also serve as a consultant for the clergy Mission and Ministry Development Review (MMDR) programme.

In July 2021, I was admitted to the order of St Alban in recognition of my service to the Diocese of St Albans.

My medical background has ingrained in me transferrable skills of assessment through active listening and investigation, finding acceptable and practical solutions, keeping abreast of development and change, and communicating this effectively.

I am able to keep the big picture in mind without losing sight of the local implications which I believe will help me make informed contributions to the work of the Synod.

I will seek and listen to people's views and concern on matters brought to my attention to take to the Synod and likewise, I will communicate relevant matters from the Synod back to the deaneries, churches/PCC's and the Diocese on a regular basis and as and when required.

My interests

- I have developed a keen interest on clergy welfare and development through being a churchwarden and my role as a consultant for the clergy MMDR.
- My membership on the Racial Justice Action Group has been a most rewarding experience in the consideration and formulation of local policies on matters of diversity and inclusion in all areas of services offered by our diocese including racial, gender, disability, and human sexuality. It is exciting to see this grow into action and it will be a privilege to represent these issues and other concerns at the Synod.
- I am keen to support and ensure the flourishing of
 - Women's ordained ministry
 - Inclusivity for all, in all aspects of worship, work, and life in the Anglican Church and community.
 - Making the word of God readily understood and accessible to all.

I am keen to be your voice on the General Synod and serve the interests and needs of the Diocese.

Thank you for reading my electoral address. If you would like to discuss any of the above, please call me on 07967912272 or get in touch through email j.kurien1@gmail.com

Jacob.