

GENERAL SYNOD ELECTIONS

House of Laity

Helen Combe



I am married to Richard, and we both regularly worship God at St Peter & St Paul, Stoke Lacy near Bromyard in Herefordshire. We are active members of the PCC; I am Minute Secretary and Richard retired this year after seven years as Church Warden. I have also served as Bromyard Deanery Synod rep for this church. I continue to host a regular weekly ladies' prayer group in our home, which has been running for 15 years, and we hold occasional Bible study courses, such as Women in the Bible, for a wider group of local mums.

Stoke Lacy is a small village; its population has been largely connected to agriculture, but in recent years many new houses have brought in many people with different backgrounds. The needs of rural parishes are very different from those in urban settings, and I hope to be able to speak for the people in my Deanery parishes and to support rural ministry in general.

We moved to this area 50 years ago, after several years in South Africa. We love Herefordshire; it is our home. We have two adult children, a daughter and a son, and four grandchildren. Tragically, though, our son was killed in an accident, but thankfully he loved the Lord and lives on with Him (2 Cor. 5:6), and we shall see him again one day.

I grew up largely in Zimbabwe, a 'church goer' and member of the church choir. But after our son died 11 years ago my husband and I were faced with a decision: do we turn to God, or do we turn away from God, blaming Him for allowing the accident to happen. Thankfully, in our grief, we chose the first option. He was there right beside us, the same God, yesterday, today and tomorrow. Without the faith and relationship with Jesus that has grown since then I frankly do not know how we could have coped. A few years ago I was able to renew my Baptism vows through full immersion and was born again in the Holy Spirit.

God has used the tragedy of losing our only son to grow my faith exponentially. I believe that the Bible was given by the inspiration of God (2 Tim.3:16). In this world of relativism, where truth is no longer absolute – your truth may be different from my truth – I turn to the Bible as the source of Truth. I have come to see that it addresses every cultural issue we face through a doctrinal lens, true then in the culture of the time, but true also in the cultural issues of our own time. As Christians I believe we are charged by God to measure everything we think and do against the teaching and standards set in the Bible.

I long for the Church to speak out to our nation with conviction, courage and clear Biblical Truth. We, the church, are called to be counter-cultural, to be radical, as Jesus was. I shall endeavour, with God's help, to do this. I know that if He is calling me to General Synod, He will open doors through your votes. Thank you.