

Joseph Pendley

Candidate for General Synod — Diocese of Blackburn

I want to offer myself for election to the General Synod; my desire for this commitment is accompanied by prayer, reflection, and counsel. I believe the Church of England has the duty to please Christ first as Head of the Body and Head of the Church, and that His Word has authority over His people.

If elected, I intend to serve faithfully for the full five-year term, representing the Diocese of Blackburn prayerfully, diligently, and courageously. The principle governing my service will be simple: Obedience to His Word over acquiescence to Opinion. The great commandment, given in Deuteronomy 6 and reaffirmed by Jesus in Matthew 22 and Luke 10, requires us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind. If we love Him, we must hear what He commands and obey completely. He asks for our whole person. Our affections belong to Him. Our thoughts, strength, and our very lives belong to Him.

I hold a BA in Philosophy, an MSc in Information Systems, and an MTh in Biblical Practice. For 17 years I was a faculty member at Liberty University's School of Divinity, teaching from the whole of Scripture. I have been on the Blackburn Diocesan Synod for nine years through my local Anglican parish, Padiham with Hapton, where I attend St Leonard's Church. As well as working in education, I was a commissioned officer in the US military from 1972 to 1996, and my area of specialism was in intelligence. The experience gave me an understanding of the responsibilities of examining evidence, exercising discretion, working within complex organisations, and making difficult judgments under pressure. I believe those disciplines will bring value in my service to the Synod.

My approach is to weigh the Word with Obedience and Worship, seeking to receive the whole counsel of God in decision-making, as my belief is that Obedience to the Word's authority is imperative in a world where storm clouds of opposition gather. Jesus said: "It is written," meaning the Word has full authority. Submission to God through obedience to that Word is in and of itself Worship. In serving on the Synod, I would ask not "What do we prefer? What does culture expect?" but rather "What has God said is of Him?" Bowing to non-Scriptural trends, I would resist—respectfully, but faithfully.

Yet resistance itself is not the purpose of my candidacy: I am prepared to say "No" because I see something much greater: a "Yes" to Christ, to Scripture, to the Gospel, and to the mission of His Church. Let's bravely cry out "Yes!" I want to see a Church of England confident in the Gospel entrusted to it: teaching Scripture without awkwardness or shame; forming biblically literate disciples; calling people to repentance, forgiveness, holiness and a new life in Christ; evangelising because the Gospel truly is good news; and preparing a new generation to receive and proclaim the faith. Where we have erred, we can acknowledge error. Where repentance is required, we shall repent. Where biblical truth has become obscured, we can recover it. And I believe the Church belongs to Jesus Christ. Please, let's respect Him.

My concerns regarding growing exploitation from elements now circulating unashamedly at the narrative level inside the Church of England are due to the antisemitic viewpoint that risks clouding Christian sympathy. The Kairos Palestine II document (motioned and

approved, 13 July 2026, with amendment to "hear") lacked truthful balance in its description of the status quo in the Middle East and unfortunately fell into a historic pattern of blood libel against the Jewish state. Britain's Jewish community has been crushed by it. Meanwhile, a large swath of the global Christian community cringed that we chose to promulgate the document, albeit "to hear" and not "to receive." Those communities are telling us that this document risks being a marker of the development of received and accepted doctrines tinged by anti-semitism within the Anglican church. My request would be: "Should we not be willing to check ourselves now at this point?" and to favour balance over condemnation against a country that is fighting for its existence in an era of terror against Israel. And should we further agree that Jesus promised to pour out His Spirit on the Jewish People regathered in the last days in the Land?

There is also a biblical dimension. God's purposes through Abraham stand at the heart of the history of redemption. Genesis 12:2–3 is not incidental: from Abraham comes the covenant history through which God brings blessing to the nations and ultimately brings the Messiah Himself. Dishonouring Abraham's own is therefore not something the Church can afford to be seen to have embraced. Therefore, if elected, I will seek an appropriate opportunity for General Synod to reconsider its treatment of Kairos Palestine II and to test and rethink its assertions. To hear Jewish voices and to honestly reexamine the Palestinian Christian voices alongside, as well as the consequences for Christian-Jewish relations.

If our judgment were right, scrutiny would confirm it. If we were wrong, obedience requires us to say so.

If you elect me, you are electing someone who:

- places the authority of Scripture above prevailing opinion
- prepares carefully, listens seriously, and examines the evidence
- will represent Blackburn, not simply occupy a Synod seat
- disagrees respectfully without surrendering biblical conviction
- asks difficult questions when necessary
- would seek for us to correct our mistakes and repent where we have gone wrong, and
- remembers that every Synod vote is cast beneath the Lordship of Christ.

In closing, I want to help strengthen a Church that is confident in Christ, confident in Scripture, confident in the Gospel, and confident in its mission—a Church where truth and love belong together, holiness is not an embarrassment, repentance leads to forgiveness, our children inherit a faith worth keeping, and Jesus Christ is proclaimed as Lord.

I long to hear Him say, "I know you, Joseph."