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[Home](#) > Church of England 2020 Synod Elections - update

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Many in the Church of England believe it should be a more inclusive, welcoming and open church. A lot is being done by parishes, voluntary groups and campaigning organisations to promote inclusion, but we all know that there is so much more to be done. This year there is an excellent opportunity to influence the C of E at the highest level as its national ruling body, the General Synod, is holding elections.

Progress on inclusion needs the General Synod to be supportive, and as elections only happen every five years, we need to act now to guarantee a strong voice for inclusion. Big changes in how the church works, such as accepting women as priests and bishops, only happen when General Synod approves legislation. With the General Synod elections in September 2020, voting for inclusive representatives will set the direction of the debate for the next five years.

Inclusive Church is working to achieve this in partnership with other organisations such as Women and the Church (WATCH), OneBodyOneFaith and the Campaign for Equal Marriage in the C of E. We have some excellent candidates wanting to stand, and we are keen to hear from you if you would be interested. But we also need people to be able to vote for our inclusive candidates. Only Deanery Synod members will be able to vote. This means that most priests in licenced ministry will be able to, but any lay people wanting to vote will need to join their local Deanery Synod. All Deanery Synods are being re-elected by parishes at Annual Parochial Church Meetings this spring (between March and May), so if you care about the future direction of the C of E find get onto your local Deanery Synod this spring and vote for an inclusive candidate in the national elections this autumn. These elections can be very close, often only one or two votes separating who is elected and who isn't, so every vote really will count. A chance to make a difference like this only comes

round once every five years, so don't miss it!

[Click here for a leaflet](#) [1] with more information, which you can print off or download to share with others who might be interested. Many lay people in the church don't realise how much influence they could have if they took the simple step of being on their Deanery Synod and using their vote for inclusive General Synod candidates, so please spread this information to friends and churches who would support the aims of Inclusive Church and the election campaign.

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Links

[1] [http://inclusive-church.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/Deanery%20Synod%20Leaflet\(2\).pdf](http://inclusive-church.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/Deanery%20Synod%20Leaflet(2).pdf)

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