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DAVID MAERZ

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Personal Background

Originally from Canada, I am 62 years old and have been very happily married to my wife, Susan, for 37 years. Susan and I met at our church's youth group. We have four adult children and five grandchildren who are now scattered across the UK in Scotland, Newcastle and Yorkshire. My family is a great blessing and I cherish them. I am extremely grateful that all my children came to know Christ at an early age and continue to faithfully walk with Him. I too came to faith in Christ as a child and was baptised when I was 14 years old. I strongly believe in the vital importance of the church as a place where all are genuinely accepted and loved as image-bearers of God. Together with my current church family I stand within the evangelical tradition of the Church, having been shaped by an emphasis on bible-based teaching and a focus on the life changing power of the Gospel.

Experience

Central to our family life over the decades has been to prioritise our commitment to and participation in a local church, which for the past five years has been St. Anne's Limehouse in Tower Hamlets. St. Anne's is located in one of the United Kingdom's most deprived boroughs, and its ministry to the local community is vital. Yet, our church is on the doorstep of Canary Wharf. As a highly diverse congregation we often reflect that there is only one thing that knits us together as a loving church family, sometimes having little in common other than our shared faith. Currently, I serve our church body in the following ways:

- member of the PCC
- home group leader
- member of the boards tasked with renewal of our Grade 1 listed building
- member of the affiliated secular charity Care for St. Anne's - engages a broad range of interested groups in the building's use and refurbishment
- volunteering in the night shelter - run in our crypt during the winter months through a separate charity

I have an undergraduate degree in Geophysics and a graduate degree in Economics. My career as an economist spanned almost 30 years. Prior to my retirement 3 years ago, I

was a senior executive at a top 10 FTSE corporation where I led a complex and highly specialised global organisation across multiple geographies. My career provided me with deep skills in:

- navigating complex organisational structures where authority and decision making do not follow simple or obvious hierarchical reporting lines and jurisdictions
- gaining support for and delivering organisational transformation
- people leadership including executives reporting to me, strategic thinking, building, and maintaining support for change and conflict resolution

Why I Am Standing For General Synod

I feel passionate about the opportunity to serve on General Synod, where I would seek to contribute to ensuring that the Church of England continues to be a place where people of all ages and backgrounds can encounter the life transforming gospel of Jesus and are able to grow in their love and knowledge of Him. My experience of how my local East London parish church is doing that and witnessing firsthand the miraculous transformation in the lives of those we have seen come to faith has reinforced my belief in the essential role of the local church. I have also seen the importance of the communion of churches working together as we seek to engage constructively with broader society, especially in the sense of sharing in the resourcing of ministry. I am interested in how the wider church can support local parishes to grow and flourish. The gospel is ultimately what changes lives for the better and I believe strongly that healthy local churches are a primary means by which this can happen.

My local parish church is flourishing as it engages with the community around it and, interestingly, a number of individuals have come to faith from having been drawn to the physical building as a first step. Our physical building is highly valuable to our congregation and wider community. Yet, the challenges of maintaining and refurbishing our wonderful, nationally significant, Grade 1 listed building are not trivial. The cost of material restoration is far beyond the means of the congregation. I have gained valuable experience and learnings associated with our unsuccessful NHLF bid for refurbishment funding. Despite that setback we have been successful in obtaining DAC approval for a refurbishment master plan. After much reflection, we as a PCC are opting for a phased approach in-line with our approved faculty which will initially address accessibility. This is a priority to ensure that our Christian ministry is truly open to all, including the community around us in Tower Hamlets.

As I have with my local church ministry and building projects, my intent, if elected to General Synod, would be to lend my experience as a corporate leader and executive to the church. I have learned that simply having a title does not make you a leader. People do not align with or follow you just because you are the boss, they follow people that earn their trust and that can inspire them. With God's help, my hope is that I can contribute constructively and compassionately to the current challenges faced by General Synod including safeguarding, financial sustainability and maintaining unity and alignment while navigating sensitive and emotionally charged issues. My work life and the struggle to renew our church's Grade 1 listed building have taught me how to build consensus to achieve good outcomes when resources are constrained, and our diverse congregation has taught me what it takes to stay one family when we don't agree on everything.

Finally, thank you for reading this election address. If you decide to vote for me, I would very much appreciate the highest preference vote that you feel able to give me.