

Election Address:

My name is Mrs. Jill Swaile, I am 53 and I live in the small village of Falstone near Kielder reservoir. I was baptized, confirmed and married at St Peter's Church in the village where I have been Church Warden for years. I am PCC secretary, Team Council secretary, Authorised Lay Minister, member of Deanery and Diocesan Synod.

I also work fulltime as a senior nursing sister in gynaecology at the Royal Victoria Infirmary, a place I have worked for 35 years (they have just given me a long service badge!) I am married to Alan and before lockdown we enjoyed travelling to far flung places. I enjoy all sorts of crafts from felting to flower arranging, I love spending time with family and friends and have just found the benefits of an electric bike!

The past 18 months have been incredibly difficult for everyone, especially in the hospital setting. My faith has helped me through this most of challenging times, many prayer arrows have been sent skywards during the difficult days at the RVI. I have been able to support my patients and colleagues by being a listening ear in times of stress and distress and bring a Christian perspective to their lives with comfort and offering prayers.

My calling to General Synod:

My calling to become a member of General Synod stems from the fact I had the absolute honour and privilege to know Canon Carol Wolstenholme OBE not only as one of *The Rectory Room Girls* from our village, but also in her role as Chair of the House Laity, then latterly when I cared for her in the final weeks of her life – her and I definitely shared a “God moment”.

She was an absolute inspirational lady, who was instrumental in encouraging me to sign up to the first Authorised Lay Ministry course in 2019. She taught me so much about what is to be truly committed to encouraging fluid working partnerships between lay and ordained members of the church and how each person can work to support each other, I promised her I would continue to do this work.

My attributes:

In my role as a nurse, I am committed to my patients and colleagues to do as much as I can to promote wellbeing not only physically, emotionally but spiritually and be a voice for the disadvantaged and marginalised in society. I have a vast experience in dealing with this group of people with patience and empathy and with a sense of determination and commitment to make a difference.

I have led change in initiatives in the NHS (another similarly large and complex organisation) that have realised transformational change e.g. I developed a programme to support and encourage women with learning disabilities to access gynaecological health and wellbeing courses. I have presented this work at both national and international conferences.

I feel I have the necessary skills and experience to lead change and support the transformation of the Church of England as a lay member.

I feel I have good interpersonal skills; I am able to communicate ideas effectively, objectively with insight and a sprinkle of humour.

I am confident in public speaking, extremely organized, optimistic and I have been told I have an “infectious enthusiasm” to get things done!

My vision:

In this time where there are fewer clergy, it is vital that the role of the laity is enabled to flourish in partnership with our ordained friends. We are all the body of Christ, this body it is made up of many parts, each playing our unique part in making the body whole and therefore enabling it to work effectively.

We need to work in collaboration, to stand for the vulnerable, transforming the churches heart, becoming forward thinking and bringing the love of God to **ALL** of society in an inspiring and welcoming way.

We need to do this, *in my humble opinion*, by remembering that Jesus is at the heart of everything and just keep thinking “what would Jesus do if He were here now?” We need to make the processes in the Church of England simpler, legislation simpler and fundamentally implement change, taking everyone’s opinions and diversities into account. If elected I will support and bring motions that encourage and increase collaboration and learning across lay and ordained ministry - which we have started in Newcastle Diocese.

I want to be the conduit for this process for the laity within the Diocese of Newcastle at a national level.

I feel I have the experience with my nursing background to be involved in decision making of important issues through debate and prayer. I am able to acknowledge and reconcile diversities in our communities and churches, working together and remembering we are held together in the love of Christ and with that love we can be supported to make fundamental changes.

Working and living through the pandemic has made us all realise that we can all adapt and work through change. Change requires the courage of compassionate leadership from everyone, at every level of the Church of England, both lay and ordained to engage with and successfully address the challenges that we are faced with spreading the love of God in the 21st century.

We all have a part to play in God’s mission and this is what brings me to apply to be a member of General Synod as I feel I can play my part is discerning the future of the Church of England.

Mrs. Jill L. Swaile

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Authorised Lay Minister

Accredited Colposcopist with the British Society of Cervical Cytology and Pathology