

## **Extraordinary Meeting of the General Synod - 24th September 2020**

Peter Breckwoldt, Keith Leslie and Gill de Berry had indicated their willingness to go to this meeting at Church House, Westminster and were indeed called to attend. Only a limited number of members were able to assemble in order to comply with the Covid guidelines; yet each 'House' of the Synod had to be quorate. A great balancing act achieved by Synod support at Church House!

After an initial inspiring Presidential address, delivered by both Archbishops (<https://www.archbishopofyork.org/news/archbishop-shares-presidential-address-special-session-general-synod> <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/speaking-writing/speeches/archbishop-canterburys-address-general-synod>), Synod got down to business.

The meeting took place to consider the one item on the agenda - the Draft General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure. In the current situation caused by the Coronavirus pandemic, it is not possible for the General Synod to meet together and pass legislation. This measure, once passed, would enable Synod to legislate via Zoom or other on-line meeting rooms. Therefore, it was somewhat ironic that we had to meet face to face to agree to meet in future, and make decisions, remotely.

Nine amendments to the measure were considered, but only one attracted a genuine debate. That was whether to include Article 7 (primarily doctrinal and liturgical issues) business on-line or not. Although most of the speakers favoured this, when it came to the vote the amendment was rejected by a large majority of the Synod.

Finally, the full Measure was overwhelmingly passed by each House with only two abstentions from the House of Laity. This means that Synod will be able to conduct its business on-line in both November and February.