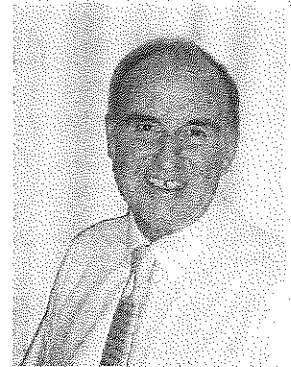


**KEITH LESLIE MBE BSc(Hons) MBA**  
**General Synod Election 2015-2020**  
**Election Address**

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**Called by...**

I was called by God to be a disciple 25 years ago. I cannot say that I was the most willing of potential converts but as I reluctantly followed my conscience and inclination I slowly, oh so slowly, gained momentum as my journey to Christ progressed. I queried and questioned everything until it dawned on me that it simply came down to a matter of faith. I believed or I didn't believe. I realised that I believe that Jesus Christ is my saviour. I stopped resisting what for me was now an elemental truth and a peace came to me. I had come to Christ.

**Called to...**

But what for? So I am a Christian, is that it? I am not by nature an observer. I get involved; I endeavour to support and to help; to initiate projects; to lead and if necessary take matters forward. For many years I have been a PCC member of the church where I worship, St Francis in Salisbury. I became Churchwarden for a period and, when we had a major fire which essentially destroyed our large church hall, chaired the group formed to oversee the rebuild. The rebuild however was to be in a format that meets today's needs as a social venue for our church and its community; to give modern facilities to the uniformed groups and to our many youth groups ranging from toddlers to those in their 20's; and, importantly, an upto date Ofsted approved accommodation for the preschool that is aimed at the families in our parish and community. Negotiations regarding plans, quotes for work et al seemed labyrinthine in nature but we were eventually successful. The hall is now in full and continuous use.

This experience proved a useful preparation for the next project where, again, I chaired the team responsible for obtaining planning permission for our Grade 2 listed church where we proposed to significantly extend its 'public' elevation or side. Again, with God's help, we have achieved our goal.

During all of this I have been fully engaged in my overriding passion, which is Salisbury Street Pastors. I started at its inception 6 years ago. I am a trustee as well as a team leader going on patrol two or three weekends a month between 10:00 PM till 3:30 in the morning. It is a hugely ecumenical movement with the 75 or so street and prayer pastors representing 23 churches and 9 denominations working together each and every weekend.

As Christians we reach out to that elusive group of 18 to 30 year olds for whom, largely, Christ quite simply does not exist. Our help and support for them is seen as completely without strings. The local council, the police, the door-staff and, most importantly, the youngsters, who number several thousand on a Saturday night, know that we are the Christians who care for them, who listen to them and who are there to help them in their need. We are witnesses of the love of Jesus on their streets, late at night and into the early hours. At times it is very intense and challenging as we deal with individuals who can be in great distress. But most of the time this

work is, and this is important, really great fun! It is a demanding yet completely uplifting experience each and every night out as the youngsters respond and enthuse about our presence and gladly accept us.

All Street Pastor Initiatives are under the national umbrella organisation of the Ascension Trust, for whom I am a Representative and attend meetings and events speaking and negotiating on the trusts behalf. I feel fortunate to be a Governor of the local 'Include' school. The school is a Christian charity, for those aged between 11 to 16 years who have been excluded from normal school but still they need an education. This Ofsted approved school is for a maximum of 10 pupils only: such is the intensity and difficulty of the task.

Well, who am I? I am Keith, I am 66 years old and I have lived in Salisbury for over 25 years. My first wife died and I am now very happily married to Gwen. Both my first and present wife were/are Lay Preachers in the Church of England and Methodist Church respectively. I have 2 daughters and 2 beautiful granddaughters. Gwen has brought to our marriage 2 more children and 4 more grandchildren. I served in the army for over 30 years as a mechanical engineer and a senior planner and administrator in various major headquarters. I rose through the ranks to retire as a lieutenant colonel.

Both in management and on the ground I learnt the absolute necessity of teamwork to achieve goals, however, I also learnt that nothing is permanent. I led on many organisational changes to the root and branches of my service, which had an annual spend of £2bn. Over the years my experience of working in very large organisations, with traditions going back some 300 years, meant that I had to work within established ways to effect the changes that are necessary to keep an organisation vital, relevant and effective. These experiences and practices I brought to my own business which I ran for 6 years after I left the army and became an advisor and consultant manager: often being asked to stay on to effect my recommended improvements. I was always fully employed until my final retirement.

### **Called for...**

I believe my experiences and skills are pointedly relevant and pertinent, enabling me to make informed contributions to the running and operating of a modern and vibrant Church of England. These skills and experiences are:

- higher level business management
- the management of my own church, which includes parish outreach and work with all age groups, 7 days per week
- ecumenical Christian outreach to the unchurched who congregate in the city centre at night.

I believe that together, they have developed in me a balanced perspective of the church at work enabling me to be your lay representative on the General Synod

I ask that after prayerful consideration you give me your first preferential vote and elect me as one of your Lay representatives for the next General Synod.