

SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF ONTARIO NOMINATION FORM 2018

**Deadline September 17, 2018*

I, **JOHN R FLEGG** of the parish of **ST. PAUL, BROCKVILLE** agree to let my name stand for nomination to:

 DIOCESAN SYNOD COUNCIL

 X **GENERAL SYNOD 2019**

Tell us briefly about your faith experience:

I am a born and raised Christian who practices his faith in the Anglican tradition. While I attended an extension of St Georges' Sunday school, where my father acted as the 'Superintendent', my first real involvement began as a teenage member of the AYPA at St Wilfrid's, Etobicoke with Curate Rev. Jim McCullum. For a time it appeared that I was headed towards a clerical role; however, before testing that call I happened to take the Red Rocket home one night with a public school friend who was, at that time, a divinity student attending Trinity. He asked me one searching question and then pronounced me unfit for ministry. Still, I remained uncertain and so I resigned my position as Cartographer-trainee and went to the Yukon as a twenty year old to see which path was the one I should follow, ministry or Geography.

At the end of my Yukon year, I was accepted at three Anglican-based colleges but ended up at Guelph - because it was the closest to my girlfriend. If you think you can see where this is going - read on. At Guelph I got involved in the sixties student movement, largely because I was a shy introvert and understood that if I was to be a priest I needed to learn how to socialize. (Once when I told Rev Ron Hoerst that I was 'a mind Christian' his response was, "Well, we're just going to have to work on that together, aren't we?" Well, I have still not 'mastered' empathy. Frankly, I just don't see it in me, something upon which my wife and I can agree publicly.) Figuring I could only handle two 'full-time' activities at once, both church and girls slid to the background, including my by then fiancée. The baptism of my son initiated my return to the church, but really it was Father Bill Ellem whose support, throughout my layoff from Canadore, and thus my search for work, that really grabbed me and yanked me back. This was followed by years of close and extended work as a Lay Reader with Revs, David Robson, Susan Steers, and Lynn Mitchell in the five-point parish of Kitley-North Augusta/Oxford. I was re-hooked and again heard the call to ministry but felt I had "a background" and that my young family was my first priority.

On my next lay-off, this time from St Lawrence College, my wife offered to support me if I answered the call. But, having worked continuously since the seventh grade and wanting to retire at 55, time was short. I instead started a small business at the age of 50 trusting that someone else would take it over once the birthing pains were over. I finally retired 20 years later at 70 when the franchiser's corporate office agreed to assume financial accountability. I hope to

retire as a Lay Reader within the next year.

What gifts, talents, abilities and skills would you bring to this ministry?

I am known as a thinker, and one who does not dabble in small talk. However, I am also known as a listener and principled leader who often looks for compromise that can be accepted by all parties. I am short on speeches but do try to speak on point. All that said, it would be inappropriate for me to ask for your support and not identify my position on, most likely, the most important issue facing the General Synod of 2019. While the Church speaks of 'delegates' my study of politics reminds me that what they really mean is 'representative': someone who will carry your views to General Synod, listen carefully to the discussion, pray for guidance, and vote on the issues within the framework each is given through prayer and discussion. Finally, and frankly I believe this is perhaps more important than all the rest - a representative is to report back to you. All this I accept as my responsibility to you should I be elected.

I resigned as a Lay Reader, and left the Anglican Church for a period of three-four years when the House of Bishops failed to lead on the issue of same sex marriage. (As Canon Borden Purcell once put it to me, "Who can follow when the Bishops refuse to leaci.") Though I recognize its inherent limitations, my personal search for compromise would see the church get out of the marriage business and adopt an annual service of blessing for all committed relationships. In my heart I support one side of the issue; but, I could live with the other if that were the God inspired decision of our Church. A decision must be made though; there are things that are infinitely more important than unity. What I cannot accept is a refusal to accept responsibility and follow God's lead in that decision.

My wife claims when I left I went to "bop with the Baptists." Truth to tell is that, while I could never accept a theology based upon their literal reading of scripture, I relished the "community" I discovered in that small congregation. I was also fortunate to be there when its cohesiveness was shaken and tested to its core. God used that experience to teach me the value of a Bishop when a community is in crisis.

My mother, a progressive non-practicing Roman Catholic, was tom apart by the exclusion of what we now know as the LGBTQ community. I am the proud father of an adopted transsexual Indigenous daughter. I fully admit that my perspective is coloured by social reality; but, I cannot see anywhere where Jesus said we should exclude people. That is not the only thing I believe. I believe Jesus came not to change the law but to fulfill it, not as man interprets it and then practices it as tradition - but as God intended it. Therefore, I support the amendment to sanction the blessing of same sex relationships.

To ratify the amendment is to apply, appropriately, the third leg of the Anglican stool (or as some would have it the Anglican tower), namely "reason". Reason is a God given gift which we are to use, at least once a generation in resolving the great issues of our youth. (Remember the truism: we fight to resolve the issues not of our own generation but those of our youth.) In building upon

scripture and tradition, in our search for God and truth, it is important we recall that as we welcome anyone/everyone into His Church, we are called to welcome them as full and equal brothers and sisters. As a religious community, we ought not to demand of our clergy that they bless LGBTQ relationships; however, every one of us should be constantly praying to God, petitioning Him to do so. The choice is really not ours. Accepting His - and every other person's choices, we can then celebrate each commitment made - and truly reflect the love of Christ in the world.

Please list your involvement in the life of the church (parish, diocese, province or national), and well as any other relative (sic) experience.

I was first licensed as a Lay Reader by Bishop Alan Marsh in 1964. Since coming to Eastern Ontario, I have served almost continuously in that role both at St Andrews, Garretton and St Paul's, Brockville. I have also served as a Parish Treasurer, as a Warden, and as an auditor. I have attended roughly 15 plus Lay Reader Summer Schools (now known as "Summer Fruit for Souls") and an equal number of FLAME weekends in Ontario, Montreal, and Toronto. My faith has grown immeasurably from those experiences. I also completed all three extension courses Wycliffe ever offered in Brockville.

I have 20 years of college administrative experience in three colleges: Student Services, Marketing, Long Range Planning, and Human Resources (CHRP). I also have an equal period of time running a small business. Taken together these experiences give me a both a public service and a private enterprise perspective on sociopolitical issues. (I am conservative in principle, socialist in policy, and liberal in hang-up.) I have a Master's degree in Education Administration from Central Michigan and an incomplete one in Politics (Canadian Constitutional Law) from Guelph - plus a number of business related courses. I was elected President of my university student government, (Guelph), a member of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Awards, and a full delegate to a number of provincial (OUS) and national (CUS) conventions.

I am past Co-Chair and an active member of St Paul's Social Justice Committee and Brockville's AGAPE Committee for Refugees. I have served on too many Parish Councils to remember, been a member/representative from two parishes to probably four or five Ontario Synods, and under Bishop Alan Read a member of two Diocesan committees. I have twice been a member of the Diocese's Lay Readers Association Executive.

Signature:  Date: 2018 09 17

This nomination is supported by: Cathy Seymour, Past Chair, Lay Readers' Association and a member

of the congregation of St. Mary Magdalene, Napanee, Ont.

Greg Smith, Current Chair, Lay Readers' Association and a member of the congregation of St. Luke's, Lyndhurst, Ont., Leeds Anglican Ministries.

