

The need to mobilise the whole Church of England to reach out to others with the Christian message is set to dominate discussions at next month's General Synod in London.

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View of the Assembly hall during General Synod from the balcony

Papers published today set out how "small behavioural changes" by the around one million people who regularly attend Church of England churches could make a "huge difference".

Synod members will also discuss evangelism among young people, and the need for a "culture of invitation" in parishes not only to reverse decline in attendance but to spread the good news to wider society.

As part of that, Synod will discuss a call for the Church to renew its commitment to be "a Christian presence in every community" by reaching out into housing estates where churches, clubs, amenities and public services have withdrawn in recent decades.

In a paper discussing evangelism on estates, the Bishop of Burnley, Philip North, urges the Church to recognise the "historic marginalisation" of social housing areas in the policies of both church and nation.

"Whilst estates were built with great optimism and can be good places to live, residents can often be dealing with multiple problems," he writes.

"Many lives are ravaged by the contemporary 'four horsemen of the apocalypse': universal credit, low-paid work, food poverty and austerity."

"The Grenfell Tower fire has revealed years of under-investment in building stock."

"Many commentators hold estates residents responsible for the vote to leave the European Union and this can all too easily play into a narrative that disparages working class political concerns."

Synod will also debate a motion calling for the Government to rein in the spread of gambling advertising to protect children.

The debate, to be led by the Bishop of St Albans, Alan Smith, will consider a call for a mandatory levy on gambling firms to fund research, education, and treatment programmes for addicts.

Synod meets at Church House Westminster from Wednesday February 20 to Saturday February 23.

A full set of papers is available on the [General Synod page](#).

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