

Candidate for General Synod

Revd. Chris Blunt

I'd like to offer myself to serve the Diocese of Chester and the wider church in standing for election to General Synod. Please have a read of my pitch below and, if you like what you read, please consider voting for me, ideally as your first choice candidate (but if not that then as your second or third choice candidate). Thank you!

I'm standing because I feel called. The issues the General Synod will be discussing during the next five years are significant, sometimes controversial, and will have an impact on all of our ministries and churches. Prayerfully, I feel I have gifts to offer that will serve the church, serve you and honour Jesus.



What you'll get from me includes:

- Long term experience of both parish ministry and cross-cultural mission;
- the temperament to engage in synodical discussions by listening (including reading the paperwork!), praying and thinking before speaking;
- willingness to speak out, speak up and question widely held assumptions;
- a desire to see the whole church flourish; and,
- a generously orthodox evangelical faith.

Many of us may be feeling that the Church of England is increasingly looking more like our surrounding culture rather than constructively and lovingly critiquing it by modelling our Christ-like faith. Maybe you want to say something about that but aren't part of one of the established networks that would give you a voice. Then maybe I could be your candidate, sitting in the wide-open less organised space that often gets called open evangelicalism!

Thanks for taking time to read my election statement,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a long, sweeping stroke.

Proposer: Revd. Hennie Johnston (St. Mark's, Lache-cum-Saltney and Chester Rural Dean)

"I am thrilled that you feel that it is right to stand for General Synod and I think you would be an excellent candidate"

Seconded: Revd. Andy Bull (St. Mark's, Bredbury)

"Well done Chris. I'm right behind you! Your vision and passion for the church to thrive in our nation is hugely inspiring."

Biography

- Currently vicar, previously curate, at St. Luke's, Chester (2013-present);
- Member of Chester Diocesan Synod (2015-present);
- Studied theology to Masters level at St. John's, Nottingham (2011-2013);
- Mission Partner with interdenominational cross-cultural mission society, Interserve, based in East Asia (2002-2010);
- Background in consulting civil engineering (1997-2001) having studied engineering at Cambridge (1993-1997).

I'm married to Liz, who is a primary school teacher at a church school, and we have three children (17, 15, 11). So, apart from being the local vicar, I'm dad's taxi service, the free driving instructor, the most annoying person in the world and proud as anything to be associated with all of them! On all church-related issues I rely on them to keep me grounded: aware of young people's perspectives and always given the view from the pew.

How you can expect me to vote on issues the General Synod will discuss in the next 5 years:

Church and culture

You can expect me to consistently acknowledge the ever-increasing gap between church culture and the culture of our wider society. General Synod can no longer expect to be listened to but must earn the right to be heard in wider society. This will not be by mirroring society decades after the event but needs to be in real time by bringing our faith and scriptures to bear on contemporary issues with love and compassion. In recent years General Synod has increasingly operated as if at war with itself with a "them-and-us" mentality. You can expect an "us-and-us" mentality from me as together, across theological divides, we seek the Lord's will.

Simpler, Humbler, Bolder

Vision and strategy for the Church of England is to become "Simpler, Humbler, Bolder". I would welcome moves to make this a practical reality so long as the focus remains on strengthening, encouraging and empowering grassroots parish ministry.

For a simpler church, I'd support the "Transforming Effectiveness" agenda to centralise those aspects of church life that would otherwise be duplicated many times over but only so long as there is parish uptake (i.e. central initiatives, but only if there is buy-in from parishes). As for simpler, more transparent CDM that distinguishes between misconduct and complaints, I'm all for it.

For a humbler church I'd support the church literally giving itself away where past abuse comes to light: repenting past mistakes, generously apologising, compensating tangible loss and continually striving to foster a safe culture for all.

For a bolder church, I'd vote to see our historic assets used, even used up, in the service of our nation: promoting carbon neutrality, sustainable housing, welcoming those migrating to the UK and in children's and youth ministry. A church that sacrificially serves gives every ordinary Anglican a reason to be bold as we share our faith. I'd like to see SDF funding far more widely dispersed and directed for implementation at parish level as well as currently, through more centralised initiatives.

Living in Love and Faith

Acknowledging how painful this is for some, I would still vote for orthodoxy (by which I mean Jesus' definition of marriage in Mark 10). But I would also vote for orthodoxy regarding access and welcome and participation in church life for all according to our gifting. We all aspire to live the Jesus way. We all fail, one way or another. We all need encouragement and support and the opportunity to learn and to grow. All means all.

Inclusion and diversity

I've lived for a number of years as an ethnic minority in a different culture. I know how that feels. The reality of unconscious bias means representation won't just happen. We have to take active steps. So, let's take the steps needed to better represent the ethnic, social class, ability and gender makeup of our communities.

If elected or if you have questions before the election, I'm very happy to hear from you and can be contacted as follows: **01244 460058 / vicar@stlukeschester.org.uk**