

David Berry – House of Laity

Age: 22
Church: St Botolph's, Cambridge
Occupation: Doctoral Student
Proposer: George Owers
Seconded: Matthew Pettifer



Who am I?

I am an incoming doctoral student in Computer Science at the University of Cambridge. I first came to Cambridge as an undergraduate in 2017 to read Computer Science. I have recently completed a master's degree in Oxford. Outside of my studies, I am an assistant leader at a local Scout group. I also enjoy rowing (and coxing), and cycling.

I grew up in Surrey in a liberal evangelical parish where I was baptised and confirmed. As a young child I attended an all-age family service with my mother and two siblings; later on, during my teenage years, I switched to attending the parish Common Worship Holy Communion service with my father the organist. It is within this context that I went up to Cambridge where I settled at the Prayer Book parish of St Botolph. I had not really used the Book of Common Prayer before so it was all rather new to me. I now cherish its beautiful liturgy and daily offices more than ever.

Why am I standing?

Church Unity – *O clap your hands together, all ye people (Psalm 47:1)*

We all strive to live out our lives as authentic disciples of Christ led by the Holy Ghost. The church corporate – being the body of Christ – is a rock and continually inspires and guides. The Church of England affirms herself as *part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church*. The Church of England exists within the wider context of the Anglican Communion and the global Church, but also in the wider context of modern and secular society. Indeed, it is the Church's responsibility in each generation to proclaim afresh the truthfulness of the faith revealed in the Holy Scriptures. The fidelity and authenticity of this mission is, I believe, fundamental. If I am elected I would vote in order to maintain our witness inwardly and outwardly to this faith as received over the centuries.

Chaplaincy – *They had an eye unto him, and were lightened (Psalm 34:5)*

The Church of England as the established Church provides a chaplaincy to the nation. The parish stands at the core of our communities baptizing, marrying couples, and burying the dead. However, its chaplaincy stretches beyond the scope of our parishes into our hospitals, and into our schools, and into our prisons, and into our armed forces, and into our universities, and so many places more. These are some of the places where the Church is needed most. Through all this it makes a distinctive contribution to the public sphere. If I am elected I would strive to maintain our Church's presence in these various settings and beyond.

Saving the Parish – *God is well known in her palaces as a sure refuge (Psalm 48:2)*

The parish – the ubiquitous heart of mission of the Church of England – is under threat. The national church is increasingly investing in extra-parochial missions, for example through the SDF, all the while some parishes are struggling to pay their parish share. This undermines the hard work that many across the country put into our parishes for the good of all whether frequent or irregular. The localism embodied in both the parish church and parish priest – not limitations but two fundamental components of the parish alongside the equally necessary faithful laity – deserves to be defended from ever increasingly nationalised bureaucracy. The parish church building speaks to its local community by its very presence and signifies the presence of a faithful Christian community. When congregations meet not in sacred buildings but in houses this missional message is obscured. Parish priests through their daily rhythm of prayer and visitations of parishioners provide much needed pastoral support in their communities alongside preaching the *Word of God* and *ministering the Sacraments*: the parish and all that therein is contained is fundamental to this purpose and to our ecclesiology. If I am elected I shall do my utmost to defend the position and rights of the parish within our Church. Whatever the expression of worship, the parish has been home for Christians throughout the centuries: we should not be letting this slip by us.

Church Diversity – *High and low, rich and poor one with another (Psalm 49:2)*

The Church strengthens herself not through uniformity but through diversity. The Church must continually be relevant to people's lives as her message – the Gospel – is as radically transformative now as it was at the time of the Apostles. Jesus welcomed all towards him and we must reflect this.

As a Scout Leader I keenly appreciate that young people – despite being increasingly exposed to the superficial – are receptive to authentic and meaningful messages. The Gospel is the most important message this world has received. The Church needs to engage with young people through its schools and offer up the Gospel's relevance. Beautiful worship – appreciated by young and older alike – speaks to people and provides an atmosphere for inter-generational involvement. The Church unites us all by our identity in Christ breaking down barriers. When there is engagement and conversation there is opportunity for growth in discipleship.

General Synod has the potential to inform and direct how the national church directs herself and her budget towards this end. Engaging with and including all members of the Church whether traditionalist, or sacramental, or charismatic, or liberal should be foremost in its considerations. If I am elected I would seek to find this heart in all that is discussed and how what is debated can become a source for continual growth and diversity because this is better for everybody. Our parishes are diverse places and by reaching out to all in our parish we assert that Christianity is for all and that the Church of England is a home for all.

Contact Me

As a young person who loves and cares for our national Church I believe in offering up my time and energy into shaping its future for my generation and beyond.

If you believe that, based on what I have aforesaid, I am able to make a positive impact to our Church through serving as a member of General Synod please consider giving me your first or another high preference vote.

Please do feel free to contact me if you have any further questions by e-mail at dgb37@cantab.net, or by telephone at **07784493584**. Or, see my blog at davidberryely.wordpress.com.