

Toby Sherring

Candidate for General Synod



Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3: 18

I have lived in the Diocese for five years. As a full-time school chaplain, I share Christ and his Gospel with children from Nursery to Sixth Form. I am married to Alicia, a former teacher who runs her own business; we have two children aged 10 and 13 and a rescue dog called Fred. I grew up in the Church of England, in a rural area, and joined the PCC aged 17. My mother is treasurer of her Mothers' Union branch, and my grandmother was a member, while I was in the Boys' Brigade.

There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 1 Cor 12: 5

As a musician and ordained minister, I have worked in parishes, schools, hospitals, chapels and cathedrals in England and Western Australia, where I was chaplain to an Anglican school, on Diocesan Synod and Examining Chaplain to the Archbishop of Perth. I briefly held simultaneous licences in Perth and Sydney dioceses, at opposite ends of the Anglican spectrum, and understand the different perspectives. My own view is that Anglicans are catholic and reformed, maintaining the historic, apostolic faith and order while proclaiming the faith afresh to each generation. One is a check and balance of the other: a stable base for mission.

I am a qualified teacher of Religious Studies and on my local Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education. I have worked as a Scripture Union holiday leader. I was ordained Deacon in 2002 and Priest in 2003. My curacy was in an Urban Priority Area in Liverpool, where I was on Diocesan Synod and governor of a community school. My MTh in Applied Theology focussed on mission, and theological reflection as a model for ministry.

You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house. 1 Peter 2: 5

I offer cover in parishes for clergy who need holidays or rest, here in beautiful East Anglia. Our landscape is full of churches, halls, and schools, planted over hundreds of years, given for and belonging to the community. The Church of England is called to maintain a Christian presence for all, despite the changes and challenges of rural and urban life. We have an amazing network, historic funding and resources allowing incarnational ministry. The future is in the parish system, where the sacrifice and faithfulness of clergy needs the support of central structures. Increasingly fewer people are being asked to pay more into the centre while receiving less ministry, forcing churches to focus on money rather than mission, and further decline follows.

He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. Luke 4: 18

We must not withdraw from the most difficult, poor areas but recognise "it is the sick who need a doctor." To sell-up, or offer only voluntary, part-time ministry rejects Christ's mission to be present and serve God's people. Lay ministry of all kinds is essential,

nurtured by well-trained, ordained ministers who can offer the sacraments for the world and the life of the Church.

You are all one in Christ Jesus. Gal 3: 28

Part of the privilege and gift of a national church is to welcome all, regardless of gender, sexuality, race or social status. We find our identity in Christ and his grace, not in secular labels.



Bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Eph 6: 1-4

Young people have a strong sense of ‘the other’ and readily engage with spirituality and theological questions, and need well-trained, theologically-articulate ministers who can relate the faith to their lives. They flourish in structured worship and silence as they can participate at their own stage and level. Church of England schools allow us to reach thousands of families with the Good News, and should be confident in offering a distinctive Christian ethos.

Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. Luke 17: 1

Safeguarding has rightly taken a more prominent position in the Church. We must be proactive in rebuilding trust, support victims and survivors, and humbly show remorse for past failures.

You are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 1 Cor 12: 27

General Synod could be a powerhouse of lively debate and forward-thinking legislation that builds on a legacy of community ministry for all. It needs more debate and time for questions, and a sense of missional purpose. Initiatives should focus on faith, and encouragement and support for those who bring Christ to communities and care for his flock.

General Synod must be in the real world, with a full range of ages and experiences that can speak the truth about everyday Christian life and be heard. At 45 I am (relatively) young; my full-time work with youth means I am grounded in the realities of secular life in this part of the world, and experience how un-churched, ordinary people interact with and view Christianity and the Church.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide these elections and the work of the Synod. Please consider giving me your **first preference**, and if you can't, your **second, third or further preference** in the vote.

Thank you for reading this address; please contact me at chaplain@tps.ch.co.uk if you have any questions. I will be pleased to hear from you.