

General Synod Election Address 2026 Birmingham Diocese, House of Laity

**Matthew Vaughan, St Paul's Bordesley Green
Yardley and Solihull Deanery**



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Proposer: Theresa Harris, Christ Church Ward End

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Who am I?

I'm Matt, 43 years old and married to Andrea since 2008. We have four kids – Sam, Ellie, Hannah and Daniel – and have been living in Bordesley Green, Birmingham since 2021. My mother and father were both vicars in churches in Hampshire and church was a big part of my life growing up. Andrea and I moved to Pakistan as missionaries in 2011, returning to the UK in 2021. We have continued to serve as missionaries here since then, encouraging churches to relate positively to Muslims in their areas.

In my spare time I love gardening, watching cricket, and hiking in the mountains of Scotland and Wales whenever I get the chance.

Experience

I grew up in a vicarage outside Basingstoke and from childhood I took part in church life at the churches in which my parents were ministering. At a Christian youth festival I made a personal decision to follow Jesus.

I studied Modern Languages at Oxford University, attended St. Ebbe's church, and joined the mission agency Interserve straight after graduating. While serving in Pakistan I worked in Christian media and with a seminary training Pakistani men and women for ministry across the country, and was deeply encouraged by their dedication and joy as they served the Lord in a challenging context.

When we returned to the UK in 2021 Andrea and I took up non-stipendiary roles as Mission Enablers in the Deanery of Yardley and Solihull. We are based in Bordesley Green where we work with the two churches of Holy Trinity Benefice. While living in one of the most deprived areas of Birmingham comes with significant challenges for our family it has also given us valuable insights into how Anglican churches can engage positively and confidently in low-income areas in which Christians are a faith minority.

Feeling convicted to contribute positively to the Church of England across the city, I volunteered to serve on Deanery Synod for Yardley and Solihull, was elected to Diocesan Synod in October 2024, and was then elected to Bishop's Council in November 2024. I see lay ministry as an essential and equal part of the overall vitality of the Church of England and am keen to amplify the voices of those of us who are called but not ordained, particularly in challenging and less fashionable urban contexts.

Why I am standing for General Synod

This is an incredibly exciting time for the Church of England! As people who know the risen Jesus we can draw confidence from the knowledge of his unfailing love for all people everywhere. In an increasingly anxious and uncertain world the offer of "life in all its abundance" is richer than ever, and I hope that by serving on General Synod I can contribute positively as the church engages with the opportunities before us.

My particular areas of experience and interest are:

- **Engaging positively with Muslim people.** I have worked among Muslims for 20 years and am passionate to see Christians equipped to relate to Muslims with respect, and with confidence in the good news of the gospel.
- **Standing against "Christian" nationalism.** I was honoured to work alongside vicars in Ward End and Hodge Hill as we responded to a UKIP march through our parish in February 2026. This experience gave me an insight into the xenophobic dangers of "Christian" nationalism and a determination to be clear in our renunciation of such an unChristian narrative.
- **Seeing churches thrive in areas of deprivation.** The parish system is a wonderful inheritance which ensures a Christian witness in every square foot of the country, but ministry challenges and opportunities vary hugely between areas of deprivation and of affluence. In order to follow the command to "bind up the brokenhearted" I would seek to build creative partnerships between churches in different contexts as an expression of Jesus' love for those on the margins.
- **Involving young people.** As a parent of four children, two of whom are neurodiverse, I am aware of the challenges facing young people in today's polarized, anxious world. Our young people are both the present and the future of the church and we need to listen to them as we involve them more meaningfully in church life.

I love the Church of England and look forward to seeing it flourish in the years to come. If you choose to vote for me I commit to working hard, listening well and doing everything I can to represent the opportunities and challenges of our wonderful city on a national level.

I would be happy to answer any questions or comments you may have – please feel free to contact me at any time.