

Candidate for General Synod



Rev. Paul Langham

Vicar, Christ Church Clifton
Bristol West Deanery

Proposed by Rev. Jordan Ling
Vicar, King's Way benefice, East Bristol

Seconded by Rev. Raymond Adams
Vicar, St John's Haydon Wick, Swindon

I'm standing for re-election to General Synod because I believe that our truly remarkable parish system uniquely positions the Church of England to proclaim by word and deed the Good News of Jesus Christ. I responded to his invitation at 14, and have spent almost all my 34 years of ordained ministry serving three parishes. Jackie and I have been married for 35 years, and are blessed with 4 children and 2 grandchildren.

As our nation emerges from the Pandemic, **strong, confident** and **well-resourced parish churches** will be more vital than ever before as we seek to serve individuals and communities with the love of God made known in Jesus Christ.

Our clergy and people need to be confident that the Church's central legislative bodies are committed to **supporting, resourcing** and **equipping** them for ministry and mission. The **Transforming Church Agenda**, which seeks to help us become a **simpler, humbler** and **bolder** Church, provides an opportunity to **set our parishes free** to be the agents of individual and societal transformation which, when strategically resourced, we know they can be.

The **financial stresses** we face, with reducing parish share contributions a national and local reality, will make difficult decisions unavoidable in the next few years. If elected, I will continue to press Synod to ensure that **resourcing the local church** remains its clear and primary focus.

In recent years, as a National Church, we have rightly been forced to face some significant shortcomings, in areas such as **racial justice; safeguarding** and the **abuse of power; diversity; and inclusion**. As a member of the new Diocesan Racial Justice Advisory Group, I hope to play my part in helping us address this critical issue. If elected, I will also continue to urge Synod to take a lead in responding to the challenges posed by the **climate crisis**.

As a member of clergy, I am deeply concerned by the failings of the **Clergy Discipline Measure**, and grieved by the damage done to too many of our colleagues. I will seek to ensure that its replacement is fit for purpose, and sits well within Synod's welcome commitment to ensuring clergy well-being.

The new Synod will also face momentous decisions around the complex issues of **marriage, sexuality, gender** and **identity**. I count it a privilege to have friends and colleagues at many different points on the broad spectrum of approaches to these issues. As we don't yet have clarity on the proposals which will come before Synod, it is vital that we engage in further listening, talking and prayer if we are to have any hope of navigating our way through by negotiation and consensus – and so, God willing, preserve the unity of our Church. For this reason, I have welcomed the opportunity to become one of the *Wayfinders* for **Living in Love and Faith** in our Diocese.

As a **generous evangelical**, seeking to model my life on that Christ-like balance of 'grace and truth,' I will do all I can to bring grace, warmth and generosity of spirit to bear in all conversation, debate and decision over the coming years.

The General Synod we appoint now will **shape the future** of our National Church, and I would count it a great honour to represent you, the clergy of our Diocese, in this role; not least by bringing experience and continuity to our representation at national level. If what I have written resonates, may I ask you to support me with your first or second preference vote? Please feel free to contact me for any further information. Thank you.

