

General Synod Elections 2021 Rev'd Vincent Whitworth Election Address

Dear Friends and Colleagues

Thank you for this opportunity to introduce myself and share with you why I feel called to stand for General Synod this year.

My Background

I am currently Team Vicar of St Andrew's Over Hulton (Deane Team) and Vicar of St Bede, Bolton-Le-Moor in Bolton. I am a member of the Manchester Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship and serve on the MDEF committee. I have seen the significant impact of national church funding through my current role on the SDF project board: Children Changing Places. I am also a trustee of a local Christian charity; Create Bolton, which uses the arts to bring people together and form a safe place for people to explore faith.



Ordained in 2007, I served my curacy in Liverpool Diocese before I returned 'home' (I was born and grew up in Bolton) to Manchester Diocese in 2011 where I served as Associate Minister at St Peter's Halliwell for 8 years before moving to my current posts.

I have been significantly involved in the wider life of Manchester Diocese throughout my ministry here; serving as Area Dean of Bolton (2015-19) and Area Dean of Deane (2019-21), serving on Diocesan Synod (2015-19), and as Bolton Archdeaconry Reader Chaplain (2014-19).

I have a real heart for mission and evangelism. I long for people to come to know the Gospel and become disciples of Christ and for communities, towns and cities to be transformed by the good news of Jesus.

In my personal experiences, particularly as Area Dean, I have seen how crucial church unity is and churches sharing resources and partnering together in sharing the Gospel with our wider society. Whatever our different traditions or denomination; we are all one in Christ and our effectiveness in mission and evangelism is dependant on our unity as the body of Christ.

Why am I standing for General Synod?

I believe in 2021, we are at a crucial point in history both as a society (as we rebuild and begin to live with Covid-19) and as a church in our ever-changing world.

More than ever before our country is in need of and open to the Gospel. The Church of England, despite our faults and failings, is still in a prime and unique position to be 'a church for all people in all places'. The decisions that will be made at General Synod over the next 5 years concerning the national church **vision** and the direction of our **mission and ministry** and how we use our resources across the Church of England will be crucial in how effective we will be in proclaiming the Gospel. I feel with my own ministry experience that I will have valuable insights to share in these continuing discussions at Synod.

If elected to General Synod, I would want to push for more **resources** to be given to parish ministry in areas of significant **poverty**, particularly for many northern towns and cities such as exist in our own Diocese of Manchester. For too many years, urban ministry in northern towns and cities has been under-resourced. If we are to share the good news effectively with communities which are often lost and forgotten about, then on a national level we need to rethink how we resource this important ministry.

I also desire to see the Church of England as a whole more rooted in **prayer**. We need to be a more praying church; praying for ourselves, praying for our communities and praying for our nation. We need to pray for the Holy Spirit to equip and empower us to be a more confident church as we proclaim together the good news of Jesus.

In terms of the ongoing discussions on **human sexuality and relationships**; I support the church's current traditional position on marriage and relationships. However I also believe we also need to find ways in which all people feel loved and welcomed in the church. It is vital that the new Synod work together to find a way forward for the church to continue our unity as we proclaim the Gospel to our nation.

In this time of change it is crucial that we as a church stand by one another in **unity** even when we disagree. If elected I am committed to standing with you and representing you at General Synod. Please do contact me if you wish to have a further conversation with me and I would be grateful if you could give me your 1st vote in the election.

Yours in Christ

Vinny

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Proposed by: Rev'd Simon Cook (Area Dean of Bolton)

Seconded by: Rev'd Terry Clark (Rector of Deane)