

Ven Pete Spiers
Archdeacon Knowsley and Sefton, acting Archdeacon Ormskirk



Why am I standing?

It is important that the Diocese of Liverpool continues to be well represented at national level. It has been a privilege to serve in this way for the past 20 years and, if elected, I would continue to serve the interests and represent the views of the clergy in the Diocese to the best of my ability. The legislative business that Synod debates does affect the work of Archdeacons significantly and so it is good to be there. Only one from each Diocese can be elected and I am grateful for the support of my fellow Archdeacons. In addition, I should like to help draw up the Diocesan profile for the next Bishop of Liverpool by being a GS member on the Vacancy in See committee.

What will be the important issues in the next 5 years?

1. **Vision and strategy:** the Archbishop of Canterbury's programme, endorsed by General Synod in February 2015, addresses the major issues facing us in financial resources, making disciples, encouraging vocations, lay leadership and discerning future leaders among the clergy, ministerial education and simplification of those legislative processes which impede mission and church growth. I have supported these initiatives and the further development of these for the 2020s led by Archbishop of York is also something I have been involved in shaping. They need to be something that will inspire and have an impact in our parishes.
2. **Living in Love and Faith:** in the next General Synod, we will be bringing together everything we have been learning over the last few years about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage to discern what God might be saying to us. I don't know yet what that is. I have an open mind but also a desire to hold us all together as far as possible. We are a broad church with a variety of views on so many different issues and I would like us to remain so for all the people of England.
3. **Safeguarding:** it is imperative that the church is a safer place for everyone especially children and vulnerable adults. We need to learn the lessons of the past and make sure that we prevent abuse from happening in the first place.
4. **Evangelism:** it is critical that Christians can share their faith and bring others to faith in Jesus Christ in times of cultural change. Whilst baptisms, weddings and funerals are still opportunities, they are in decline and we need to create many other opportunities for congregations to use. The evangelism task group needs to be encouraged in its work.
5. **Varieties of ministry:** whether you are stipendiary, self supporting, local or pioneer, parochial, non-parochial or chaplain, each ministry has different challenges and all are needed if the church is to flourish.
6. **Environment:** we have regularly debated this at Synod and our responsibility to mitigate the effects of climate change. I voted to become 'net zero' by 2030 not least to show our care and concern for our sisters and brothers in the Anglican communion who are most affected. Momentum must not be lost as we lead up to COP 26 in Glasgow in November.
7. **Youth and children's ministry:** I welcome the Growing Faith initiative and encouraged by the enthusiasm of Dioceses for it, but the fact remains that we continue to be an

‘elderly’ church and we do need to become ‘younger’. Children and young people have been badly affected by the pandemic and they are too valuable to ignore both now and for the future.

8. **Engagement with the world:** private members’ motions can highlight particular areas of concern and stop the church from looking inwards all the time and becoming isolated from the world we serve.

9. **Mutuality and generosity in finances:** Liverpool is the Diocese with the least historic resources at their disposal. Discussion is beginning to take place about how historic resources can be shared more fairly and it is vital that our representatives can make their voice heard in constructive ways.

10. **Covenant for clergy well-being:** every Diocese has been asked to have a big conversation on this and we all need to establish a culture of well-being for everyone in the church where people can be open and honest. Having been involved in drawing it up, I should like the opportunity to see its implementation and to participate in the debates when it returns to Synod in the next 5 years.

What can I offer to General Synod?

1. A **willingness** to speak in debate and ask questions as well as a **respect** for the views of those with whom I might disagree. With the legislation to enable women to become bishops and ‘mutual flourishing’ it has needed **‘grace and truth’** in equal measure.

2. **Urban experience:** two thirds of my ordained ministry have been in urban areas and the voices of those living and working there still need to be **heard** especially in time of welfare reform and growing inequality.

3. A **sensitivity** to issues of injustice and disadvantage wherever it is found because of my experience of disability through thalidomide.

4. A real **appreciation and enjoyment** of other people’s church tradition.

5. A **desire** to make General Synod an easier and less intimidating place to allow all to contribute. I would **encourage and support** the newly elected members of the Diocese of Liverpool, clergy and lay, for example.

6. A **passionate belief** that ‘the local church is the hope of the world’ (Bill Hybels).

Who am I?

Born in **Speke** in 1961, became a Christian at **St John’s College, Durham**, in 1980 and trained for ordination at **Ridley Hall, Cambridge**, 1983 - 86. Curate at **St Luke’s, Princess Drive, Huyton**, 1986-90; Team Vicar at **St Peter’s, Everton** 1990-95; Vicar of **St George’s, Everton** 1995-2005; Vicar **St Luke’s Crosby** 2005-2015; Area Dean for **Sefton North** 2009-2015; Archdeacon **Knowsley and Sefton** 2015-present; served on Crown Nominations Commission 2007-2012 and member of the panel of chairs for General Synod 2016-2021; Member of House of Clergy standing committee.

Please vote for me and make me your **FIRST** preference.

If you would like to discuss this election address or have any questions you would like to ask me, please feel free to contact me.