

Rev Timothy Edwards

General Synod Election address

Nominator:

Rev John Musson, vicar of Cudham and Downe and Area Dean of Orpington

Secunder:

Rev Hannah Adams, rector of Chipstead and Chevening

I am pleased to offer myself to serve the Diocese of Rochester and the wider church in standing for election to General Synod.

I came to Christian faith as a child through seeing the difference that it made in a local church that was focused on the love of God shown in Jesus Christ – and I still believe that there is nothing more powerfully transformative than the church, when the church lets itself be shaped by God's love.

That is what I long to see more of – and, if you would like to see that too, could I ask you to consider giving me your vote (if not your first preference, then perhaps your second or third)?

Who am I?

- 42 years old, Husband to Debbie (a chartered public finance accountant); we share our home with Baxter (our black Labrador), Tarquin & Julius (our two cats), and our (quite self-righteous) cockerel & six bantam hens
- Rector of the United Benefice of St Katharine's, Knockholt, with St Margaret's, Halstead since 2017
- I am an active part of Sevenoaks deanery, and secretary of the Rochester Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship
- In 2019 I went to our partner diocese of Kondoia in Tanzania to lead and speak at their diocesan clergy conference (pictured)
- I was born in the North of England and have lived in a wide range of contexts (Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, Tyneside, the Middle East, London, curacy in Cumbria) helping me to engage with a wide range of people
- I read theology at Durham University, where I also did three years of postgraduate research on the New Testament



Preaching to a group of young people in Kondoia Diocese

- I worked in the City of London as a management accountant for seven years
- When time permits, I relax by going to the gym, painting miniatures, or watching the latest superhero film

What are some of the issues?

- **Evangelism and church growth** – the number one issue has to be for our churches to be reaching out effectively and faithfully with the reality of God’s love in Jesus Christ. We are wonderfully positioned to do so, with the parish system giving us a Christian presence in every community, but, if we are honest, we know that much of the church is struggling to reach people – especially those of my generation or younger. I am thrilled to see a renewed focus on reaching out with the gospel through, for example, the Vision and Strategy for the National Church and want to support that being at the centre of Synod’s agenda.
- **Financial stress** – the impact of declining attendance, coupled with COVID, and changing demographics, means that the church faces increasing financial challenges. This, especially when combined with the reduction in numbers of clergy available, forces difficult decisions. As a former accountant, I know what it is to plan for financial challenges and to do so with imagination and boldness that can lay the foundation for growth.
- **Engaging with the most vulnerable in our society** – one of the first things that we did when I started here was to restart the parish foodbank, and over the last eighteen months it has been striking how many people we have found ourselves connecting with and supporting, (even in an apparently comfortable part of Kent). I want to help make sure that engaging with the less privileged does not drop off the radar of the Church nationally.
- **Living in Love and Faith** – the previous issues obviously connect here, as the next Synod will have to consider how to take forward the work done as part of Living in Love and Faith: how we can remain faithful to Jesus’s teaching and how we can share the love of God clearly, effectively, and sensitively.
- **Care for clergy** – many of the clergy nationally are under strain and feel under-supported. I want to work to make sure that the church’s national and regional structures are fit for purpose and will work to support local parish clergy and not to add to their burdens.

I would love to speak with you about any questions you may have and how I could best help take your concerns forward.

Every blessing,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. O. Law', written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.