



**Revd Andrew Micklefield**  
**St Lawrence Vicarage**  
**Church Street**  
**Alton GU34 2BW**  
**01420 88794**  
**[andrew@potr-alton.co.uk](mailto:andrew@potr-alton.co.uk)**

Election Address for General Synod    September 2021

I have faithfully served on General Synod since the 2015 elections, thank you for electing me. I have very much enjoyed these last years and I believe I have contributed well to the discussions, groups and meetings within Synod. Having prayed and sought guidance I would very much like your support to serve again and follow through on the important work already started.

As we look to the next sessions of General Synod I would like the opportunity to bring my commitment, experience and passion for the growth of the Church and the mission of Jesus to them. I believe I have a calling beyond the parish in which I serve yet with the practical experiences of it to guide and stimulate my approach to other groups, scenarios, meetings and debate.

My commitment to the Winchester Diocese in my being on Bishops Council and Diocesan Synod and serving as Chair of the House of Clergy also gives me varied insight into the work of renewal and reform. I fully support the pragmatic simplification that is needed to make the local and regional church more fit for purpose and ready for the greater shift from maintenance to mission. At its heart needs to be our worship and discipleship. No growth, spiritual or numerical, comes without a deep commitment to them and I will 'bang that drum' consistently.

The agenda item which will need support and gracious discussion in these next sessions is 'Living in Love and Faith'. My 'open evangelical' nature, I trust, gives me the ability to enter into this discussion process with love and an open grace. The Bible, I believe, gives us clear guidance of how relationships need to work - without love we are just a noisy gong or clanging cymbal. My own feeling is that this is an area of conversation and discussion which could easily sideline other important items of agenda such as spiritual renewal amongst the missing generations, working towards the environmental agreements already made and enabling God's people to effectively witness to Jesus as Lord. 'Living in Love and Faith' must be handled sensitively, respectfully of other positions, prayerfully, Biblically and with clear leadership so that it is part of the whole mission of the church and not just a sub-set of it.

The area of safeguarding will undoubtedly be on the agendas and again it needs a strong voice and yet compassionate handling - I already see this happening and applaud the work of all those who have been involved.



**Parish Office:** The Parish Centre, Church Street, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 2BW  
tel: 01420 83234    email: [potr.alton@btinternet.com](mailto:potr.alton@btinternet.com)    website: [www.potr-alton.co.uk](http://www.potr-alton.co.uk)

My other commitment would be to the Setting God's People work. This has to be a key priority for the Church of England and the recommendations of the initial report need support as we grow the depth and ability of lay leadership and our everyday faith. It needs to permeate our decision making and be seen through all the various elements of church life – it needs a voice in every debate. I would like to contribute this as we embed the new Church of England strategy.

Why vote for me?

- Experience of General Synod and its ways of working
- To be able to continue to support the on-going debates and conversations
- My longing for the growth of the Church
- My ability to listen well and hopefully speak well to those on the Synod with me
- The purpose to be collegial and respectful but to vote with my conscience and understanding of the Bible, our Christian heritage and with good prayerful consideration
- Working experience of governance and trusteeship across a spectrum of organisations from PCC, Winchester DBF, local Christian Youth Project (The Kings Arms), local schools and almshouses.
- An ability to speak up and but also to know when to shut up – and to get things done appropriately and sensitively

## **Personal Background**

I am 50, married to Fiona a Deputy Headteacher, and with 2 children - Emily (18) and Dan (16). I trained as a Primary School teacher and became a Deputy Headteacher before leaving the profession and working as a Youth & Children's Work Trainer and Development Officer for the URC. I have a great interest in music, playing piano and organ, and am part of band in Alton gigs in local venues. I like food and can often be found in the kitchen cooking up something for guests.

As parish priest, Chair of the House of Clergy, member of Bishop's Council, a passionate disciple of Jesus Christ and a firm believer in the growth of the Church, I believe I am well prepared to serve you as a member of General Synod and seek your vote in this election. I will seek at all times to be open, willing to engage with the breadth and depth of the Church, and passionate about the privileged position I believe we have as the Church of England in our nation.

Thank you for reading all this. I would greatly value your support.

Proposed      Revd Ben Sargent, Vicar of Bransgore & Hinton  
Seconded     Revd Angi Nutt, Vocations Adviser & Diocesan Director of Ordinands

## THE REVD DR DANIEL NEWMAN

Rector of the Parish of the Sherbornes with Pamber  
rector.sherborneswithpamber@gmail.com (01256) 541607

Proposed: The Revd Jonathan Clark (Chineham)  
Seconded: The Revd Alison Bennett (Basingstoke)

*Working together for a Church of England that has confidence in its inherited structures, worship and beliefs to reach the nation for Christ, and cares for individuals and society.*

### My story

I am 36 years old, married to Brooke, and we have six children: Caedmon (11), Jerome (9), Reuben (7), Anastasia (6), Isaac (2) & Nicaea (10 months).

I was not brought up in a Christian family, but through the children's activities in my parish church, heard the gospel and had faith in Jesus Christ from a young age. My experience of church during my teenage years was of independent churches through a school friend. I rediscovered the Church of England through accidentally tuning into Choral Evensong after Games in the Sixth Form at school one Wednesday afternoon and then attending both college chapel and an evangelical Anglican church at university. This was a time of significant growth for me in my faith. I went up to university to read Medicine, but through opportunities to preach in my college chapel, leading my college Christian Union and student Bible studies at church, and receiving further training in preaching through church, I discovered a passion and an aptitude for sharing the gospel with those outside the church and helping Christians grow in the faith. Others recognised this, so I submitted myself to the discernment of the church for ordained ministry. I graduated from medical school but didn't practise (although my obstetrics placement was useful when I had to deliver two of my children at home before the midwife arrived!).

### Ministry experience

If elected, I would bring to General Synod experience of ministry in churches in the evangelical tradition in a variety of contexts. I served my title in Weymouth; according to the Church Urban Fund, it is among the most deprived parishes in the country. This has given me an understanding of the challenges of ministry in seaside towns. Following this, I was the Associate Minister of a church on the outskirts of Woking, which has given me experience of suburban ministry. I am currently the Rector of a single rural parish with three churches. One of the pressing issues affecting rural communities which I observe is the tension between preserving the character of village communities and the sale of farmland for housing stock to serve the growing population. Another is rising house prices and the changing demographic as people relocate from large urban centres.

### For the parish

I firmly believe in the parish system as an effective means of evangelising the nation with the relationships it creates between the church and the community. If elected, I would support the archbishops in keeping their pledge to support it and press for resources to be directed towards, not away from the frontline. As the Mission and Pastoral Measure is being revised, I would resist moves that make it easier for dioceses to close churches and make clergy redundant and homeless. Whilst rejoicing at those who are coming to faith through resource churches, my observation, even within my own deanery, is that the approach taken with them, along with the formation of multi-parish benefices, rebranded as "Benefices of the Future", has caused significant individual hurt and a breakdown in trust, and places huge pressures on clergy. I do not see a commitment to the parish system as antithetical to the need for new worshipping communities; my own rural parish has new housing



estates which are separate from the historic villages, do not naturally identify with them, and have no worshipping community of their own.

## **Worship**

I believe in the immense power of worship to form us, whether we are aware of it or not, and that good liturgy is therefore important. I value both traditional and contemporary liturgy, which is reflected in my being a trustee of the Prayer Book Society and a member of the Group for Renewal of Worship (GROW). This has given me the joy of working with people across different traditions. I believe that Prayer Book Services continue to be a means by which people of all ages find life in Christ, as evidenced by the emergence of online Prayer Book Services during lockdown and in-person services as restrictions have lifted. I have written articles for the Prayer Book Society's journal. I also wrote a chapter on the Psalms for the book *Reimagining Worship*, the reflections of GROW on Common Worship after twenty years, and recently contributed a reflection on the importance of place to a Grove Booklet on worship during the pandemic. I believe I could make a meaningful contribution to ensuring the Church of England continues to produce effective resources for prayer and worship. This is especially important as more is increasingly shared online.

## **Medical background**

If elected, I would bring to General Synod my medical training which would enable me to contribute in an informed way to medical issues in society to which the Synod needs to respond. Assisted dying is likely to be a significant issue early in the next Quinquennium. I affirm the sanctity of life until natural death; the church should be advocating greater resourcing of, and research into, palliative care to make that life plausible. I am a co-author on a peer-reviewed paper in the field of evidence-based medicine. The general scientific training I received would also help me to contribute to the discussion of other scientific matters.

## **Other important issues: marriage, safeguarding, the environment, race, guiding principles, governance**

I believe that the church's historic understanding of marriage is the best for human flourishing and should remain unchanged. I believe that the current liturgical provision is sufficient.

Revelations of abuse carried out by John Smyth and Jonathan Fletcher have shaken my own evangelical constituency. In my parish, we are evaluating our culture and developing new policies. I believe the national church as a whole needs to learn from its failures and reform its safeguarding practices so that people may have confidence in them, and so that justice may be done for victims, and they may receive the care they need.

Care of creation is good in itself and an important point of contact between the gospel and our culture. This summer, my parish ran a rewilding event with a local resident. However, the church needs to be careful not to support solutions to environmental problems that cause harm in other ways and discriminate against other parts of the world.

The gospel of Jesus Christ leaves no place for racism in the church. In eliminating this, the church needs to avoid adopting ideologies that will cause further division.

I believe the security offered by the Five Guiding Principles is still needed. Under the Five Guiding Principles, I have supported the ministry of women in licensed and authorised rôles and encouraged the training of women in my own parish.

I welcome simplification of the central structures of the Church of England, but transparency must be ensured in the process of appointments to key committees and boards.

*Thank you for taking the time to read this address.*

# Reverend Rachel Noël

## General Synod Election 2021

Priest in Charge, St Mark's Church, Pennington

**Nominated by:** Revd Sheena Williams, Area Dean of Southampton

**Seconded by:** Revd Angie Smith, Vicar of Hartley Wintney

### Short version of election address:

I'm enthusiastic, creative, passionate, joyful, prophetic and prayerful. I would love to share these gifts with the wider church, through General Synod. I hope that, even through our disagreement, that Synod can work to enable a depth of flourishing for all believers, to care and support all our lay and ordained leaders; creating processes that support the most vulnerable, so that all feel able to belong and offer their gifts and strengths for the work of God in our churches and communities. I am committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and roles within the church, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, mental health or sexuality.



### Longer version:

#### Who am I and what is my background?

- I grew up in South London, and was very involved in the Baptist church from a young age, leading in the Sunday School and Girls' Brigade, part of the worship group and preached my first sermon at 17.
- I'm an accidental Anglican. As a teenager, it transpired that I was allergic to the floor polish at the Baptist Church. I fell in love with the Anglican liturgy, the rootedness and connections across time and place.
- I studied Maths & Philosophy at Nottingham, then married and settled in North Baddesley. I was a lay youth leader, worship leader, PCC and Deanery youth teams; creating altar frontals and banners in my spare time.
- I encountered silent prayer in a Julian prayer group. I take an annual silent Ignatian retreat at St Beuno's.
- As a member of the Community of Hopeweavers, silence, prayer, creativity, worship is part of my rule of life.
- Having completed an MBA, I led work on organisational change and strategy across Carnival UK (Cunard, P&O Cruises, etc). I brought together people across the business at all levels, including ship and shore, addressing processes, where 'we've always done it this way', with fear of change, and suspicion of others. Through making connections, building relationships across diversity and division, valuing all voices, I led work creating and implementing new, more effective ways of working. I've never shied away from challenge, or the seemingly 'impossible'! I was invited to speak at international conferences on process improvement.
- I trained part time at STETS, whilst working and bringing up our young daughter. I was year group rep at STETS, supporting the students, staff and the Trustees. I became a Trustee of STETS and helped take it through a merger with Sarum College, and was invited to be a Trustee of Sarum College.
- I am a Trustee of Modem - a hub for leadership, management and ministry, creating national conferences.
- My curacy was in Avon Valley Churches, with Revd Canon Gary Philbrick. It was a particularly formational curacy, when I had a spectacular atypical reaction to medication, and had to be sectioned in psychiatric hospital, and my medication immediately switched. In the wake of hospital, I was privileged to be diagnosed with Autism, ADHD and Bipolar. It has been an incredibly life-giving, unexpected journey; a typical, late diagnosed, neurodivergent female, learning a new language to understand more of who I have always been.
- I'm Priest in Charge in Pennington, connecting the local schools, pub, social club and church, sharing God's love and hope in a community that often feels isolated, shunned and forgotten. We have significant levels of child poverty, mental health challenges and addictions. Pandemic has released opportunities to bring together my technical and creative hobbies, as we have embraced online worship, connecting with people across the community and beyond via social media; alongside ongoing community art installations using our very long church hedge! We shared this work on BBC Breakfast last year.

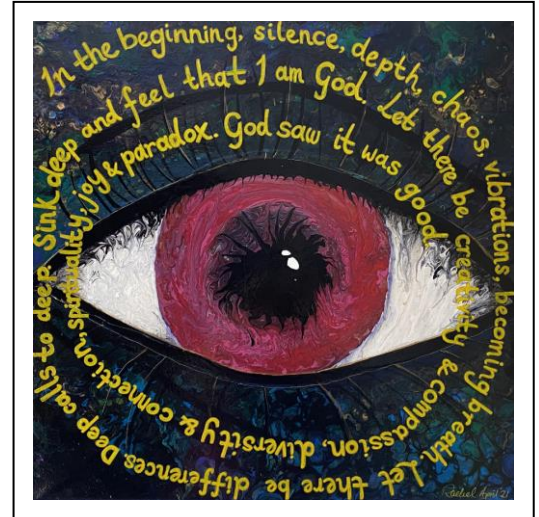
- I'm part of the HeartEdge network of churches.
- I'm on the planning team for the Inclusive Church Disability Conference.
- I have been a speaker at :
  - Disability Conference at St Martin in the Fields
  - CofE Digital Learning Labs blog & webinar
  - Winchester University's Feminist Theologian and Artist's Symposium
  - HeartEdge Shut In, Shut Out, Shut Up disability, faith, ableism and the church seminars
  - Susanna Wesley Foundation podcasts
  - BBC Radio and television, speaking about neurodiversity, mental health, faith and the church
  - Dioceses of Winchester and Gloucester, leading training around neurodiversity, faith and the church
  - Society for the Study of Theology - Theology at the Borders of Psychosis

## Why am I standing for Synod?

The Archbishop of Canterbury has articulated a vision for the Church of England that includes:

- **A church that is younger and more diverse**
- **A barrier-breaking church**
- **Prophetic**
- **Being honest about its mistakes**
- **Providing a safe place for all**

I am really excited by this vision. My personal experience has been that we still have a long way to go in many of these areas. For example, others have said that it is an "accident that I am ordained," I'm "an anomaly as a priest, due to my diagnoses", that I "don't fit", that I am "larger than life" and that I "should be silent" and "go elsewhere". Clergy have wanted to pray for my healing, for release of demons, and have advised that in eternal life there will be me without any of these 'disorders'. These labels also describe my strengths of creativity, determination, energy and connection. From these particular experiences of exclusion and othering, I am passionate about breaking barriers, removing stigma, challenging prejudice, releasing fear; about noticing God's Spirit already at work within so many different people across our churches and communities. I want to show that God works through disabled people, neurodivergent people, people with mental health challenges - that our differences, our vulnerabilities, our challenges can also be our strengths.



I am passionately committed to working with others across this Diocese and beyond, to go through the uncomfortable process of learning to be honest about our mistakes, of reflecting on the ways in which we silence and diminish those that are different, and of ensuring that the Church of England really is a safe place for all. There are significant challenges facing us as a church; yet we also have the deep hope of abundant life, the promise of light and hope that Jesus offers.

## What I can offer you:

- My commitment to honesty and openness, accountability and transparency at all levels.
- My willingness to challenge and to ask questions.
- My passion for process, and ensuring our values are embedded within our process – and not something to hide behind. To ensure that everyone feels deeply valued and respected, not silenced, hidden or ignored.
- My deep desire for the measures to support Clergy Wellbeing and for the changes to the CDM processes, to translate into a robust care and support for clergy and lay ministers across our organisation.
- My commitment to listen to you and to pray with you, to listen to God and to pray for our church.
- My belief that the Archbishop's vision for the church of England can be realised, that God's Spirit will work deep within our Church, so that God's love will be known even more widely throughout our nation and beyond.

I would love to have your first vote in these elections. I will do my best to serve the whole of our Diocese, our churches, communities and schools. Please do get in touch:

[vicar@penningtonchurch.uk](mailto:vicar@penningtonchurch.uk), 01590 462022, @ThePinkVicar

## General Synod Election Address 2021

### The Revd Angi Nutt



**I am standing for General Synod because I believe in the Church of England, and feel called to be a part of its structures and governance. I want to see the C of E and all within it, flourish and grow.**

I am married to Tim, we have four children, three young adults recently graduated and at university, and one sixth-former still at home; not forgetting the very fluffy golden retriever who is still relishing the change to working from home!

I have ministered in the Winchester Diocese since 2011 and in that time I have served on Diocesan Synod and was an elected clergy member of Bishop's Council for 6 years.

I bring the experience of being a parish priest and a member of diocesan staff to offer within the decision-making structures of our Church.

I grew up and found faith in the Baptist church and as a young adult found my home in the C of E.

I sit comfortably across church tradition; I have worshipped and ministered in a variety of churches, from evangelical charismatic to liberal catholic, large to small and urban to rural.

I am involved in the Charismatic Sacramental network of *On Fire Mission* and I am part of the worshipping community at Ascension in Bitterne Park.

So why do I feel that I should stand for General Synod?

There are always big things, big questions facing the church, and therefore Synod, and each quinquennium has its issues that we can anticipate, and those we cannot (no one expected the pandemic!)

Paramount though, is our commission to mission, as exemplified in the Five Marks of Mission, where we show Christ's love to others in service, in combatting injustice, in caring for our world, and in the proclamation of his good news and the nurture of those who have come to faith.

As we, God willing, emerge from the last two years we cannot carry on as we did pre-covid. This once in an epoch experience has not changed all the issues, or the ideas, but it absolutely has changed how we must approach them. We now more than ever need to listen to each other, to hear each other's stories, our hurts and our joys.

Accepting that difference and diversity are a part of life means being aware that the topics of race, wealth and poverty, sexuality, neurodiversity, and mental health & wellbeing are things that affect us all because we are community. They are not issues that can be picked up and put down, they are intrinsic to our life together.

Church is like family and families can bring out the best and the worst in each other. We may not always agree, but we can love one another and work together to find creative ways to function well, avoiding polarisation and othering of those from whom we differ.

We will not all have the same experiences or process life in the same way, and we need to ask how we can move forward together in that understanding, speaking up for issues of justice, for the recognition and inclusion of difference.

I have an ability to sit with tension, and to find ways ahead which include and honour the different viewpoints, ideas and opinions. My own lived family experience is one of diversity in many areas. I want to bring these gifts and experiences to the service of the wider church, and to work with others to find that place where we hold this tension together, by God's grace, genuinely including all.



# Adrian Pearce



I wish to stand for 'General Synod' as one who upholds the traditional Anglican views and values of the received Church, is faithful to the teaching of the first four Ecumenical Councils and to the three ecumenical Creeds. **Pastoral care** and upholding **established doctrine** are central to my ministry, with **veneration of the sacraments**, the teaching of **biblical scripture** and **attending those in need** being central to my priestly life.

## Anglican authority

For me, essential to Anglicanism is the foundation of its authority established in the threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, revealed to the universal Church in scripture, and expressed in the Communion of the East and West. Established by divine authority, this is fundamental to any ecumenical discussion within the context of the 'Five Guiding Principles'.

## Sacramental life

The sacramental life of the Church remains the 'heart-beat' of prayer-life, with the daily celebration of the Eucharist, and the rhythm of the Divine Office providing the solid foundation upon which I entrust my ministry to God and his people. I uphold

the inviolability of the seal of Confession as unquestionable and eternal.

## Living in Love and Faith

I have read the recent publication 'Living in Love and Faith'. It presents much material for consideration in the light of developments in thinking concerning human relationships, within the spheres of both psychology and sociology, in a changing cultural dynamic. A compassionate understanding of both sexuality and gender-perception has enabled those, who previously felt marginalised, to find welcome and fellowship in the community of the Church, and legislation for civil partnerships has acknowledged the civil legality of same-sex partnerships.

## Christian marriage

Endorsing the sacramentality of marriage, I believe it essential that Holy Matrimony is understood as a divine grace instituted in accordance with the will of God-eternal. As such, marriage remains a divinely eternal grace, upheld by the 'Book of Common Prayer' to be that between one man and one woman. I believe it is only in that context that Christian marriage is defined and consecrated.

## Worshipping in church

During 'covid', experimentation has attempted to bring the Church to the people, where the people were prevented from getting to the Church. This has provided a lifeline to many folk but, apparent to me was the inadequacy of the 'virtual' Church to fulfil the incarnate and sacramental needs of the Church's body. The essence of 'Church' as the 'Body of Christ'; the 'Word made Flesh', was there in principle, but absent in practice.

## Parish ministry

It is my belief that essential to a thriving Church, is the maintenance of the parochial system. The growth of the 'mega-Church', crossing parish boundaries has been, in many ways, a laudable attempt to reach greater numbers of worshippers, but it cannot substitute for the personal intimacy of a ministry where people are known by name, their houses are visited and their circumstances are intimately understood and ministered to by their priest or pastoral care-team. Within the virtual Church lies a potential for individual Christians to become anonymous and absent to fellow worshippers; distanced from the God who knows us by name and whose image and presence we know in the faces and in the touch of others.

## Keeping it local

I have often heard the question asked as to how our 'Common Mission Fund' is used. Where resources, essential to the provision of parish priests and pastoral care, are disbursed and prioritised for Diocesan management and administrative schemes and structures, there is surely a need for the Church to re-evaluate its priorities and its Christ-centeredness. Jesus called for 'workers' to be sent into the harvest, not managers! I believe that the historical, local ministry, embraced within the parochial system is the bedrock of the Church's life and something we lose at our peril.



## Clergy Discipline

It is without question that clerical life must be consistent with Christian values, and measures must be in place to address conduct where such may be considered inconsistent with expectations. This requires parity of treatment for both the complainant and the one complained against. It is only right and fair that both parties be kept informed of the process. Currently, I believe the present process is deficient in parity, clarity and pastoral care for the respective parties and needs to be radically reviewed.

## Ordained life

I was made deacon in 1995 and ordained priest the following year. I ministered initially in Jersey and then was subsequently appointed Priest-in-Charge of Bournemouth, S.Ambrose 2013 and continue to serve there to date.

*Please feel free to contact me should you wish to discuss any matters that I have raised, or perhaps those issues which I have not addressed!*

My contact details are:  
Telephone – **01202 911569**  
E address – [afpear2@gmail.com](mailto:afpear2@gmail.com)



# Revd James Pitkin

Vicar of the Thorngate Benefice since June 2003

Area Dean of Romsey Deanery

Corps Chaplain to the Royal Air Force Air Cadets

Proposed by Revd Canon Richard Harlow  
(Area Dean of Basingstoke Deanery)

Seconded by Revd Canon Gary Philbrick  
(Area Dean of Christchurch Deanery)

## Why do I want to stand for election to the General Synod?

I would like to stand again for General Synod and, if elected, influence debates and legislation. I have energy and commitment and a strong desire to ensure that the Clergy of Winchester Diocese are represented and play their part in the General Synod.

## What can I offer to do?

- Listen to all
- Consult and draw on the expertise among diocesan clergy colleagues
- Prepare for debates and vote
- Support measures to improve Clergy Wellbeing. Continue to work to replace the Clergy Discipline Measure with a quicker and fairer process (I sponsored a motion to ensure that the new process listens to the Ecclesiastical Law Society and Society of Martha and Mary reports)
- Be part of the debate on Pastoral Reorganisation: The last Synod saw a 'green paper' on reform of the Pastoral Measure, the legislation that governs reorganisation of parishes and (as a consequence) security of clergy in post. There is a continual tension between flexibility for change and respecting the rights of parishioners and clergy to be represented – although much of the paper is reasonable modernisation, there is a fear (reflected in the 'Save the Parish' campaign) that this will provide a vehicle for wholesale closure of churches and/or removal of parish clergy

## What are my experiences and affiliations?

- Married to Sue (an ordained Hospital Chaplain in Southampton)
- Lived and worked in a variety of settings: urban (Manchester and London); suburban (Marlow); and, rural (Scotland, Lincolnshire, Wiltshire and Hampshire)
- Trained in Salisbury on a Non-Residential Course alongside those who were to be ordained to stipendiary and self supporting posts.
- A School Governor (like many clergy) at many schools over the last 28 years
- Member of the Ecclesiastical Law Society, which has informed my work on Synod
- A Chartered Engineer with 19 years' service in the Royal Air Force I still retain an interest in aviation, engineering and the military
- Committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and roles within the church, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, mental health or sexuality. Some candidates may not be clear about their views on equal marriage, women's ordained ministry or inclusion – please do ask them
- Currently experiencing a Pastoral Reorganisation

In preparing this statement, I looked at two questions that were asked of me at the last set of elections in 2015. My replies to them still hold true for me now.

**What do you see as the single greatest challenge the Church must face over the next 5 years, and how would you seek to address it?**

There are many challenges facing the Church over the next 5 years and I have difficulty singling one out. Perhaps, over time, one will emerge. The challenges, which will be huge, include **Finance** and **Church Growth**. Many of the challenges are involved in 'Reform and Renewal' - a major piece of work involving ministry, finance, vocations, evangelism, and simplification of some of our church rules.

As to Finance, there are plans to release money to increase the number of ordinands by 50% by 2020 (*2021 Note: a 24% increase was achieved between 2014 and 2018*) and, to distribute money for Church growth. How can the decisions be made and will the money help?

Church growth has been described as the 'golden thread' which ties all the reforms together. But how to encourage and measure growth? One Church observer says that clergy are panicky about the reforms because they seem 'very bottom line — if you can't get more punters in then you've failed'. In addressing any challenge it is necessary to listen and to understand (and pray) before taking action. I believe that decline is not inevitable and that the Church will grow. God has given the Church all that it needs to be the Church – and fulfil its mission.

**As we seek to 're-imagine the Church' what are the changes and developments you would hope to see?**

Changes and Developments hoped for:

**Recovered Enthusiasm** – many initiatives have ended up leading to depressed clergy.

**Better use of the God-given resources** – better and more use of SSMs and Retired Clergy.

I believe wholeheartedly in the parochial system – being available and ministering to all who live in the parish, the whole community. I welcome the opportunity the church has to grow and develop in new and exciting ways and want to see us grasping these more enthusiastically whilst recognising the rich treasury of traditional resources we have and maintaining these.

These two questions remain vital for us and central to the work of General Synod in the next 5 years. With care, prayer and determination we should be able to sort out our finances, grow and use our God-given resources.

General Synod voting is by single transferable vote. If you are intending to vote for me, please put me high on your list, preferably number one. But do, please, use your vote.

If you would like to discuss any issues that I have raised then please feel free to contact me:

The Vicarage, Romsey Road, Lockerley, Romsey Hampshire SO51 0JF

☎ 01794 340635

✉ [jamespitkin@priest.com](mailto:jamespitkin@priest.com)



**The Revd Dr  
Ben Sargent**

Proposed by the  
Revd Nick Hiscocks  
Seconded by the  
Revd Sarah Yetman

Dear Clergy Friends and  
Colleagues,

I would be most grateful  
for your support with a  
first preference vote as I  
seek re-election to General  
Synod. I'm looking forward  
to working for  
**transparency and  
accountability** in our  
Church, better **welfare for**

**clergy** and others in ministry, continued **faithfulness** to the teaching of the Bible and the global Church and **resourcing** of the local Church for evangelism. Whilst I'm not usually the first to greet new developments and initiatives with enthusiasm, I think the *Vision for the Church of England in the 2020s* is excellent and reflects my hopes for the future.

### **Humbler**

Our Church needs to come to terms with its place in our society, humbly submitting to the lordship of Christ. It has been a great privilege to hear the voices of victims and survivors of abuse during the last session of General Synod. We need to listen, learn and respond justly. In my own striving to listen and learn, I have published a study of the theology of safeguarding (*Theology* 124.3) which has led to further involvement in this conversation. I want to continue to listen and learn here. Our safeguarding failures have shown the need for the Church to become more transparent and its leaders more accountable. Synod has an important role to play here, ensuring that decisions are made *by* Synod and that its business is not simply a matter of receiving presentations. There is nothing that is now hidden that will not be made known. Synod needs to show humility by rejecting 'virtue-signalling' motions (which the public has little interest in) in favour of costly action which effects change. This is the approach we need to take in response to abuse, the climate crisis, racism and disability. I have tried to vote and speak in line with these principles in the last session of Synod.

### **Simpler**

It is beyond doubt that the life of the local Church has become much more complicated in recent years. Decisions about buildings and mission are complicated by an often-bewildering set of requirements which increase financial costs. Voluntary leadership roles which each parish must have are increasingly complex and demand enormous investment of time. Synod can do much to assist the smooth running of parishes, such as seeking consolidation of administration where possible and allocating financial resources to parishes, such as, for example, through fees from cremations. In my own experience as the vicar of a multi-parish benefice which is being reorganised with the addition of two more parishes, it is the unnecessary complexity of tasks and challenging financial goals which make ministry stressful. It has been wonderful to see the development of interest in clergy wellbeing in recent years: some simplification could go a long way to ease the pressure clergy and other leaders are under, provided that simplification serves the local Church rather than becoming a tool for cutting frontline clergy posts.

## **Bolder**

I long to see the Church of England unashamed of the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe. More encouragement needs to be given to churches active in evangelism and ministry to younger people. Again, this encouragement ought to be in deed, not just in word. It was very sad to see the excellent recommendations of the *Growing Faith* report downgraded from *resourcing* to *commending* churches in 2020.

It was a great privilege to participate in the Shared Conversations during the last session of General Synod. I feel that I learned a great deal about the experience of others and the hurt that has been caused to many. The experience also gave me a great deal of reflect on in terms of our use of the Bible in this conversation and I shared some research which stemmed from this in a couple of articles (*Expository Times* 128.2 and *Theology* 120.6). I can see that there is still much more learning to be done to reject homophobia and transphobia, but I am not persuaded from my engagement with the Shared Conversations and LLF that a change to the Church of England's understanding of marriage is justified. The challenge for the Church in our complex and hurting society will be to be bold in holding out the hope we have in Christ.

## **About me**

I am 38 years old. I became a Christian when I was 17 and continue to delight in my adoption by grace. I've been the Priest in Charge of Bransgore and Hinton Admiral in the New Forest since 2013 and have taken on two additional parishes this year.

I'm married to Kelly and we have seven children(!) between the ages of 16 and 4: Jacob, Jonah, Eloise, Ezra, Persephone, Hermione and Athena.

I love being outdoors, particularly if I'm running up a mountain, pretending I'm in the Tour de France in the New Forest or doing my best impression of a seal being attacked by a shark as I swim in the sea. I'm always excited to do these things with someone else and plenty of conversation.

I get great joy out of music, particularly playing early French music on the harpsichord or 20<sup>th</sup> Century Russian music on the piano.

I love to research and write. My doctorate from the University of Oxford is in the use of Scripture in Early Christianity and I have published academic books and articles on this and other aspects of biblical hermeneutics. I also teach Church History and New Testament Theology at Moorlands College and am a trustee of St Mellitus College.

Please get in touch: [vicar@bransgoreandhinton.org](mailto:vicar@bransgoreandhinton.org)