

I would like to offer myself to serve the Diocese of Leicester and the wider Church in standing for election to General Synod.

Whilst I have been ordained for only 8 years, I have had a wealth of experience in Church of England congregations over the four decades of my life - from being a "cradle Anglican" through to working as a parish apprentice and Youth Worker (in both employed & voluntary capacities) on the Wirral peninsula.

At the heart of my faith, I believe that the Good News of Jesus Christ is for all men, women and children of whatever background. However, I have a particular passion for ministering in **deprived, urban settings** (more on this below).



I am convinced that the Holy Spirit can grow the church. In dependence on Him, we as disciples of Christ must live and proclaim the gospel to the end that entire communities are transformed through faith in Jesus. I am passionate about *locally-rooted, culturally-relevant* local churches playing their full part in this God-given calling.

Whilst labels can be unhelpful & at times misleading, I would categorise myself as an evangelical of 'generous orthodoxy': 'orthodox' because I hold to the authority of Scripture in all matters of faith and doctrine – and 'generous' because I would love the church to demonstrate the radical combination of grace and truth that marked Jesus' own life and ministry.

The following information and comments will, I hope, provide you with an understanding of how I approach the possibility of being elected / serving. I would be grateful for your support in the election (and if I am not your first choice candidate I would ask you to consider giving me your 2nd or 3rd vote).

Thank you

Overview

Current post	Vicar, St.Christopher's Church Saffron Lane, City of Leicester (since 2017)
Previously	Curate at St.John's Hartford & Christchurch Greenbank, Cheshire (2013-16) Ordinand, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford (2010-13)
Pre-ordination	Full-time Youth Worker, St.Andrew's Bebington & Townfield Church (2008-10) Ministry Trainee, St.Andrew's Bebington & Townfield Church (2007-08) Research Assistant (GIS & statistics), Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (2005-2007) Project Support Worker, FIRST CALL Housing Consultants (2003/4-05)
Family	Married to Sarah (Speech & Language Therapist), two children of school age: Joshua & Faith. Fan of reading (history, politics, culture, theology), football & rugby (spectator these days!), sporadic poetry writing, and (when my complex dietary needs allow) spicy food & good whisky!

Recent experience / responsibilities

- Representative of Leicester Diocese on the national Estates Evangelism Task Group (EETG)

- Active member of the Diocese of Leicester Deprivation Panel
- Linked to the National Estates Churches Network

What might I offer as a General Synod member?

In 2019, General Synod passed a motion committing itself to making sure there was a church on every significant social housing estate in the country, after decades of closing churches & withdrawing clergy. That is a commitment worth celebrating! However, a lot has happened since then, with the pandemic bringing into sharper relief our financial challenges. Therefore, how will this commitment be born out over the course of the next Synod term? Both the opportunity & challenge of supporting long-term ministry in our most deprived areas lie before us.

My secular work in Housing & Local Authority has given me understanding & experience of the needs of our deprived communities, but my subsequent ordained ministry (both as curate & vicar) has significantly deepened this. According to 2011 census statistics, my current parish is the 2nd most deprived in the Diocese of Leicester, and my time as a curate was spent living on the edge of a social housing estate.

I would like to offer this knowledge, experience & passion as a General Synod representative, and advocate on behalf of our more deprived communities in this season of challenge & uncertainty.

Issues

Financial stress

With declining attendance in many dioceses, coupled with the impact of the pandemic, the Church nationally is facing significant financial stress which is leading to reductions in expenditure. As might have been predicted (and as footballer Marcus Rashford demonstrated with his campaign for holiday food provision) our deprived communities have been affected in acute ways. With most well-funded churches being located in affluent areas, the need to honour the 2019 Synod motion (see above) against the financial landscape will be a big challenge - especially in the face of pastoral reorganisation at parish level.

Ministerial Education & Training

The last decade or so has seen major shifts in how training for ministry has been undertaken, and this looks set to continue as part of the Reform & Renewal announced in February. However, will the training of leaders *who come from, and remain rooted in, their local urban communities* be an integral part of this? Therefore, whilst new training pathways for leaders from more deprived areas in Blackburn diocese & London offer encouraging signs, now is the time to consider & discuss their applicability nationwide.

Vision & Strategy

The Archbishop of York has recently outlined a vision for a *simpler, humbler & bolder* Church. This envisages a church which is simpler in structure, serves the common good, and is energised and enthused by the good news of what God has done in Jesus Christ. My own church's recent involvement with Church Urban Fund's 'Near Neighbours' Project was aimed at developing the common good in our area. Therefore I welcome the opportunity to explore how the Church of England can serve the common good in an increasingly pluralistic culture, and I feel voices from deprived areas should be heard in this.

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Nominated by Revd Ed Down, Curate-in-charge, Hope Hamilton Conventional District

Seconded by Revd Sami Lynsey, Vicar, St.John's Clarendon Park
