

Matthew Parkes for General Synod

Proposed by Christopher Elliott (Reigate Deanery; former Lay Chair)

Seconded by April Alexander (Tandridge Deanery Lay Chair; General Synod 2000 – 2021)

Building A Secure Future: Inclusivity Without Agenda



I believe that God is calling me to stand for General Synod as an Inclusive Church Supported Candidate because if we do not adapt to the times and do so quickly then the Church of England will lose relevance.

I hold a liberal Anglo-Catholic theology, borne out of prayerful study of Scripture and a rigorous academic theological education. A theology of rising to Christ's call to unconditional love and acceptance.

Jesus gave a voice to all. If elected I will engage with all Southwark Deaneries between sittings to ensure the voices of Southwark are heard. I will campaign tirelessly for a secure future within Synod and without. For a Body of Christ that speak well of each other. For a church without walls. For inclusivity without agenda.

I will vote pragmatically in the best interests of our future. I will not be swayed by current trends or fashionable thinking. I will support a vision and strategy that puts mission at the heart of decision making whilst protecting our parishes and established 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. This commitment is not driven by political ideology or personal agenda. It is driven by faith.

In the 21st century, young people's understanding of what it means to be human has gone through a sea change. As stepfather to two teenage children, I can testify that their generation have an attitude to sexuality and gender fluidity that many of us might well struggle to understand. Acceptance is not just expected, it is demanded.

The Body of Christ has always adapted to the times. Even if you do not share my theology or my ideology, I encourage you to reflect prayerfully on the impact that continuing to marginalise the under-served and the dispossessed might have on our future. Please do contact me if you would like to discuss further.

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About Me

Personal Details

- I am 49 years old. Married to Sorel (a member of Reigate Deanery Synod and a Living in Love and Faith facilitator for Southwark Diocese).
- Stepfather to two teenagers (19 and 17), one with autism and one with Asperger's Syndrome.
- Servant to a five-month-old Pug, two Burmese cats and one Exotic Shorthair.

Churchmanship

- Reader (Lay Minister) -in-Training at St Augustine's College of Theology and St John the Evangelist, Redhill.
- First Bass in traditional robed choir and member of the Pastoral Ministry Team, specialising in mental health issues.
- Living in Love and Faith leader with a liberal, Anglo-Catholic theology.

Secular Experience

- Managing Director of Royal Mail's highly profitable Stamps & Collectibles business.
- Fully accountable for agreeing strategic measures and policy changes directly with the government, the Royal Family and industry regulators.
- 25 years' experience of driving organisational change in companies including Royal Mail, the BBC and BSkyB.

Priorities for a Secure Future

Inclusion and Equality

- The ordination of women has been enshrined in law. The Five Guiding Principles should not be misused to allow the minority a disproportionate share of voice.
- I support all who have discerned the call to ordination, regardless of race, socio-economic status, gender, or sexuality whilst strongly opposing any restrictions - including celibacy - placed on their lives.
- I firmly believe that a Church of England marriage should be open to all.

Mission and Outreach

- I am supportive of a Vision and Strategy which places mission and pastoral care at its heart.
- I will make it a priority to ensure that existing parishes are protected as the church planting programme expands.

Clergy Wellbeing

- Our clergy are our lifeblood. I support centralised measures that will reduce bureaucracy and release the clergy from unnecessary administration.
- Supporting stipendiary ministry is vital to ensure a more diverse range of candidates are financially able to answer the call to ordination.

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