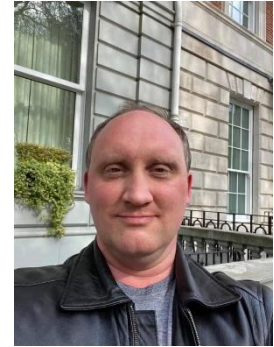


# James Reid

## General Synod (House of Laity) Candidate 2021

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The Diocese of Southwark has a tradition of sending to General Synod experienced men and women, with many years of service to the Diocese and considerable understanding of a range of issues. I hope to complement that experience and understanding with my own fresh perspective. Currently I am secretary of the Croydon Central Deanery, and have been on the Diocesan Synod since 2018.



I believe strongly in a representative group of both lay and ordained sharing in the governance of the church. I am passionate about collaborative ministry and have experienced, and can worship God through, the rich diversity of churchmanship across our diocese.

I am passionate about lay ministry and currently exploring this as a future mission. I enjoy chess, bagpiping ([www.baggypipes.com](http://www.baggypipes.com)) and Krispy Kreme doughnuts.

## My Faith Background

I was introduced to the faith through the YMCA and later attended church parades with the Scouts, but inevitably there comes a time when you need to make your own mind up.

By the time I was 12 my parents were divorced, and we had little very money coming into our household. Then one of the parents at my sister's school, seeing we needed a holiday, invited us with them to Spring Harvest. It was here that the Gospel message was first presented to me in a way I could understand. Support and follow up from my youth leaders led me to make a commitment to Jesus and to be Confirmed when I was 14. I preached my first sermon in church when I was 17 and after graduating with a B.Sc. (Hons) degree in Computer Science, continued in youth ministry until 2014.

## Key Issues for General Synod

### Youth Ministry

Youth Ministry has always been important to me because without it I would never have found my own faith. I believe that reaching out to young people needs to be done in an age-appropriate manner. Many churches are good with Sunday School and adult sermons, but there is a gap between the ages of 10 and 20 that is often neglected. Teenagers change a lot within these few years and getting the balance right can be challenging. The churches that succeed tend to divide this category into smaller age ranges, but in a non-prescriptive way, recognising that some teenagers develop at different rates to others.

## LGBT

Every human being has dignity and should be accepted for whom they are, yet members of the LGBT community have often felt excluded from worship when more emphasis is placed on the adjective rather than the noun. LGBT in church has been a divisive for Christians, yet we must not shy away from difficult conversations (and neither did Jesus!). I will do everything I can to make church a place where everybody is made to feel welcome, free from judgment while respecting those with more traditional views on scripture.

## Accessible Services

Two of my grandparents (both on my father's side) suffered from dementia in their later years and I know from first-hand experience the impact this terrible disease can have. It is important that people with dementia don't fall off the church radar and it is heart-breaking when somebody disappears from the community because they haven't been followed up. I would like to see more courses offered to help churchgoers understand dementia and sometimes even the smallest of changes can make a huge difference.

A Dementia Friendly Service is often called an Accessible Service and I would like to see more of these available. An Accessible Service should be simple to follow, it typically lasts no longer than 20 minutes and contains familiar hymns. The sermons often have one simple theme throughout, and perhaps include something that is sensory. (For example, you could pass round some herbs and talk about "fragrance of God", or photographs and talk about memories.)

## Keeping Church Buildings Open

The Church of England is there for everyone, not just Christians. Keeping churches open outside of services of worship is a key element in the link they have with the community they serve. An open door enables people to find a quiet place to pray, it offers somewhere to sit and think, and it enables visitors to the area to enjoy any historical treasures you may have. A steady flow of legitimate visitors also helps deter those with criminal intent.

**Your vote is important in this election. I ask for your first preference vote and should I be elected, your prayers in the months ahead.**

Do please contact me if you have any questions or would like to discuss any issue.

**Proposed by:** Mr Joseph Goswell, Croydon Central Deanery

**Seconded by:** Mr Ranil Perera, Croydon Central Deanery

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