

Election address: Paul Waddell

My name is Paul Waddell, and I'd be very grateful if you would consider supporting me to represent Southwark Diocese in General Synod.



The reason I want to be a member of General Synod is that I believe passionately about these issues, and I want to be part of shaping the way the Church of England responds to them.

- **Children and Young People** – Most people who come to Christian faith do so as a younger person, and most that walk away from our faith also do so when they're young. I believe that prioritising this area of our work and service, whilst adhering to the highest of safeguarding standards, is a vital part of the church's mission in the coming years. I hope to be a voice on General Synod that says, in relation to every issue, 'Think about what this means for the children of our nation and our church.' I want my daughter to grow up within the Church of England to have the life in all its fullness that Jesus promised to his followers.
- **Inclusivity** – Synod should work towards there being no barriers created by churches between people and a relationship with God, be that with regards to age, race, gender, sexuality, disability or wealth. I want my daughter to be part of a church where she never has a doubt that all are truly welcome.
- **The Environment** – The Church of England is in a unique position to help reconnect people with God's creation, and the land on which we depend. We must consider what Christian environmentalism will look like both in rural and urban areas. We must ensure that Synod's decision to divest from fossil fuel companies that won't meet Paris Agreement targets by 2023 is followed through. I want my daughter to grow up on a planet that has a future and a hope.

- **Our Worshipping Communities** – I support wholeheartedly the desire of the leaders of the Church of England to help people whose lives are currently untouched by all that God wants for them to find faith. I believe in a mixed economy of fresh expressions and thriving churches, lay and ordained leadership complementing each other. I firmly believe that only strong parishes can create strong church plants. I also believe in the value of theological education, and thorough pastoral and safeguarding training. I want my daughter to grow up in a Church of England that is growing, not diminishing.

At home in South Croydon, a place I love, I live with my wife Stephanie, and our 1-year-old daughter Lydia. For many years I have run a church football team, been involved in music for worship, been a member of PCCs and Deanery Synods, and (after completing the Bishop's Certificate) I have been encouraged to test my vocation by occasionally preaching and leading services. I have stood to be a local councillor in my home ward twice, though evidence suggests I am far better at winning board games than local elections!

Growing up in an atheist family, I came to faith at 17 years of age, inspired by the message and actions of a local church that was truly being good news to the poor. My faith inspired me to turn my back on an early career in banking and train to be an anaesthetic assistant for the NHS. During the pandemic I have worked on the front line, in the theatres and ITU of a London hospital, seeing at first hand the difference that faith makes in a crisis, be that through the pastoral support of wonderful chaplains, the hope and comfort of the gospel for those suffering and their families, and the inspiration that God gives so many of my colleagues to serve beyond their normal capacity.

I'd be very happy to talk with anyone with any questions, either by emailing me on paulmartinwaddell@hotmail.co.uk, or by telephone on 07540764596.

I hope you will feel able to take part in these elections, whoever you decide to vote for, and I will be very grateful for any support you are willing to give me, first preference or otherwise.

In His service,

Paul Waddell