



The pandemic and its aftermath represents the biggest change in the communication of the gospel since the first century formation of the early church. I think we stand on the threshold of great opportunity as a national church: the pandemic has swept away many of the old assumptions about life and faith, and there is a real hunger for spiritual meaning and purpose.

I have been hugely encouraged by the way that churches have adapted to the challenges, but there is more to be done, and clergy will need support, help and encouragement. I would like to offer myself to serve the Diocese of St Albans and the wider church by standing for General Synod. I am really interested in seeing how we can better make the connection between the rich expression of Christian fellowship, worship and learning which we experience in our churches on a weekly basis, and the huge number of unreached people in our parishes. Some of the lessons learned during the pandemic might help us bridge the gap and move forward into growth and blessing as a national church, particularly in how we blend our on-line presence and connection with our physical presence in the parish.

I am a parish priest, with 21 years of parish ministry under my belt who loves the variety and opportunities of parish ministry, and has been blessed with many encouragements in my time in ministry, serving in small, medium and large churches. I am a family man, supportive of the ordained ministry of women and the need for increased diversity within the church. Mary and I have four children to keep us grounded and aware of the needs of the next generation. It is my conviction that every parish has the potential for growth and we need to seek God's will, being bold and faith-filled in our obedience to his leading.

By conviction, I hold to a "generous orthodoxy" on matters of faith and doctrine, rejoicing in warm friendships with others who hold very different views to my own. Surely we are called to demonstrate to the world, how we can live together in unity, truth and love?

I hope very much that some of the things I've mentioned, resonate with your hopes and ambitions for the developing witness of our wider church. I would be so grateful for your support in this election, and if I am not your first choice, I would ask you to consider giving me your 2nd or 3rd vote – and your ongoing prayers, that I might represent you with all godly wisdom and compassion.

David

Some background detail on me

Current post: Vicar, Christ Church, Chorleywood

Previously: Rural Dean of Rickmansworth, Vicar of All saints Danehill, Curate at St Andrew's Bebington, Student President at Oak Hill Theological College

Pre-ordination: Public Relations Consultant advising clients on a whole range of issues from tourism and food and drink to crisis management, Business Studies graduate with Marketing Honours, Domestic Servant in the Royal Household

Background: Youngest of five boys, brought up in Norfolk. Born in Glasgow to a Scottish father and Swiss mother, dual national: British and Swiss, some understanding, I hope, of the challenges of being a citizen of more than one country (!)

Nominated by: Terence Russoff, Associate Minister, Christ Church Chorleywood

Seconded by: Peter Ackroyd, Vicar of St Mary the Virgin, Wootton, Bedford

Why am I standing for synod?

I have a particular interest in the following issues, and commit to listening intently to all sides of each discussion, and making a positive contribution to our thinking as a wider church:

Mission and evangelism – how can we move forward into blessing in the post-pandemic world? In particular, what aspects of church should stay the same or change?

Developing models of church governance – in this volatile world, where accountability is an essential part of leadership, how can we help our clergy leverage the huge lay resources at our disposal for the blessing of our communities?

Living in Love and Faith – how can we maintain the integrity of our witness as Christians while holding very different views on these issues?

Safeguarding, power and abuse – how do we keep a healthy focus on these issues, which makes our churches safe space for everyone, while avoiding the extremes of obsessive interest or disinterest? In particular, how much support and guidance are we really providing for clergy in all these issues?

Diversity – what does it mean for us not just encourage diversity in terms of numerical balance at all levels in the church, but to develop our understanding of how properly addressing this issue can lead to immense blessing?