

Election Address

**Rev'd John Chitham**

Proposed: Rev'd Dr Steve Bate  
Seconded: Rev'd Mark Dunstan



Dear friends,

As I ask for your vote in this election address I am aware that I am not very well known in the Diocese (having only been here for 2 ½ years) but believe that God has called me to stand. Whether he has called me to be elected is up to you! So why should you vote for me? I've listed some of the salient points in bullet points at the bottom if, like me, you find there is too much literature coming to read fully!

I am married to Basma with one grown up son. My previous positions were as a Bishop's Chaplain (in Blackburn) and as a parish priest in Worthing and Beirut. During those years I have been on three Diocesan Synods and on General Synod for 4 years. It is difficult to overestimate the advantage of having experience of being on General Synod in order to function well. It is a complex organisation and was very daunting at first. Whilst on GS I have spoken on Middle Eastern affairs and arranged fringe meetings. If I am elected I would be able to "hit the ground running" as your representative.

In Blackburn I was part of the senior leadership team and proud to work happily alongside Bishops Julian Henderson, Philip North and Jill Duff. In that time, I had to be involved in various CDMs and I am aware of the severe deficiencies in the system. If elected I would, in particular, wish to see that the act of suspension is only used as a last resort. I would also work for clergy to have a greater opportunity to know the nature of the charges being brought against them.

I am proud to have been one who voted in favour of women bishops in General Synod, and I believe was a great work of God's Spirit. However, I believe there now needs to be a greater determination that all traditions will be able to flourish, including the appointment of "traditionalist" catholic and evangelical diocesan bishops.

I am opposed to the move to redefine marriage, believing that "traditional" marriage is both biblical and an integral part of God's plan for humanity. However, I also believe we need to listen to the pain people of all sexualities who feel rejected by the church and by God, and do all we can to be loving and welcoming. I will attempt to be both listening and speaking for a way forward in the impending

discussion on Living in Love and Faith that helps understanding and yet maintains an integrity of Christian conscience.

My main passion is for mission and I was delighted to support the Reform and Renewal initiated by General Synod. I will continue to support a “mixed economy” mode, valuing the parish system but also recognising the need for parallel mission-focussed initiatives that are supported by strategically directed funding.

My hope and prayer is that, as someone of experience in both the ordained ministry and in General Synod, I can be your representative in a way that helps us go forward in mission to our country and have a constructive dialogue within the church. If I have the privilege to be elected I will see this as a calling from God. So, I hope you will feel able to vote for me, preferably as first choice but if not (given the voting system), high on the list of preferences.

Yours in Christ,

John Chitham

#### Personal details

- Married to Basma (with one son)
- Incumbent Standon and the Mundens with Sacombe
- Member of General Synod since 2013-16
- Previously Bishop’s Chaplain, Bishop’s adviser on Inter Faith, and Mission Partner overseas

#### Key policy commitments and reasons to vote for me

- Working for a total revision of the CDM in favour of better natural justice for clergy
- Working for a commitment for all traditions in the church to flourish according to the 5 guiding principles of GS1076
- Opposed to a redefinition of marriage whilst welcoming the need for dialogue and loving understanding of all sexualities by the church.
- Passionate about mission and supportive of a mixed economy mode for the future.
- Knowledgeable about international affairs and inter faith.
- Experienced in the working practices of General Synod.