

Thank you for taking the time to read this election address. I am an SSM curate in Chesham (Bucks). I am seeking your support in the election because I believe I have the right skills, knowledge and time to add value to the deliberations of General Synod, and to represent the interest of fellow diocesan clergy. I have extensive prior experience in the civil service, business and the Christian charity sector, most recently as CEO of **Clergy Support Trust**, previously known as Sons & Friends of the Clergy. I set out below how, in general terms, I will approach the issues facing Synod in its next quinquennium. I won't give a detailed position statement on each issue, because I do not want to rush to judgement without first hearing both sides of the argument.



One of my main areas of expertise, given my role at Clergy Support Trust, is the **wellbeing of clergy and their families**, an issue which has had some attention in recent years with the 'Clergy Covenant'. But much more needs to be done, especially with pre-pandemic studies suggesting that **over 40% of clergy have considered giving up ministry because of stress**. If anything, the situation is even worse now. Work needs to be done on the ill-conceived and badly-applied Clergy Discipline Measure, on conditions of service, on implementing the Covenant across dioceses, on improving pastoral care for clergy and on making ministerial formation more responsive to the challenges of ministry. At Clergy Support Trust I saw how so many members of the clergy struggle with burn-out, mental health issues, financial worries and lack of pastoral support. This is not healthy for the church!

If you have any further questions, please feel free to get in touch via the contact details below. I hope very much that after prayerful deliberation you will feel able to give me your support, if not as your first preference, then as your second or third. Thank you again.

Who am I?

Born in London and raised in Essex, I studied history at Leeds and went on to pursue careers as a diplomat in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and then as an investment banker. I moved into the Christian charity sector in 2009, becoming CEO of the development charity Embrace the Middle East. In 2017 I became CEO of the 362-year-old charity Sons & Friends of the Clergy, which I relaunched as Clergy Support Trust in 2019. One of my achievements there was to launch the Clergy Support Trust Library in partnership with SPCK/IVP, a free e-book resource for ordinands and curates, for whom I knew books were a burdensome expense. I have spoken regularly at conferences such as New Wine and Greenbelt, and at fringe meetings of General Synod. I 'retired' in December 2020 to finish my theology training at St Mellitus College in London.

Having been ordained deacon in July 2021 I am now serving my title as a part-time self-supporting Assistant Curate at St Mary's, the parish church in Chesham. I also volunteer one day a week as a chaplain in my local hospice. I am married to Ruth and have two grown-up daughters. My interests are football (Spurs fan and qualified referee), progressive rock, choral singing, theatre and hill walking.

The issues facing General Synod

In addition to clergy wellbeing and reversing the long-term decline in church attendance through focused evangelism, a key issue for General Synod over the next few years will obviously be **sexuality and the Living in Love and Faith initiative**. While I start from an orthodox position on these issues, based on the Church's historic and current teaching on sexuality and marriage, I do want to see what is proposed first, and to hear the considered views of our Bishops, who I hope will show theological and pastoral leadership. I recognise the need for the Church to respond to changes in society and my heartfelt prayer is for a way forward which enables people of different views to remain in fellowship and communion together.

I note the **'Save the Parish' campaign** and fully support the parish as the main way in which the Church maintains a presence in our communities, while recognising that new initiatives are needed to promote evangelism and discipleship. The two are not mutually exclusive. I want to see a more **diverse church** and am aware from my time at Clergy Support Trust of the many challenges facing UK minority ethnic clergy. I am committed to **women's ministry** at all levels in the Church and to the Five Guiding Principles. Having overseen an investment portfolio of over £100 million at Clergy Support Trust, I support a robust approach to **ethical investment**.