

Rev Mark James Hopkins

**Proposer: The Revd Sonya Wratten,
Vicar of Reading Minster.**

**Seconder: The Revd Grant Fensome,
Area Dean of Bradfield and Vicar of
Basildon, Aldworth and Ashampstead.**



I'm Mark, Rector of Pangbourne with Tidmarsh and Sulham in the Berkshire Archdeaconry, member of Oxford Diocesan Synod and a proud training incumbent. I am also a newly appointed volunteer LGBTQIA+ chaplain for Oxford Diocese.

Prior to moving I was Rector of Castle Bromwich in Birmingham for four years, after serving a curacy in Warley Woods in the Birmingham Diocese. I served on the diocesan synod in Birmingham, one of the 5 poorest in the country (in contrast to Oxford!).

Whilst in Birmingham diocese I supported young vocations by walking alongside several prospective ordinands from the LGBT+ community. I was also a New Testament tutor for lay readers, as well as helping to train new curates in taking baptisms and marriages.

Before ordination I was a children's ministry trainee, and a primary school teaching assistant. I also led on CPAS venture camps for 10 years, and have a passion for ministry to children and young people.

In my free time I enjoy playing violin and piano, singing with the Thames Valley Gay Chorus, and competing in a fortnightly pub quiz team. I also enjoy travelling to new places and walking holidays.

Why I am standing

I am standing most of all because I love God, love the Church of England, and want to support the future vocations of young people exploring their calling within the church.

I am standing as an openly gay priest with awareness that one of the casual vacancies was created as another gay, inclusive priest moved on from the diocese. Over the next two years, important votes will be taken as part of the *Living in Love and Faith* process which will affect the lives of LGBT clergy and the mission of churches more widely to younger people. Representation from gay men and women who are affected by these decisions most is vital for fair process.

***Please consider giving me your first preference vote as an inclusive candidate.
Remember to vote from Friday 3rd May and no later than 31st May.***

What I stand for

Living in Love and Faith

- for the synod to **implement without delay the proposals already passed by synod** in November 2023 to trial a “stand-alone service of prayers for same-sex couples”.
- for the bishops to **fulfil their promise of January 2023** to replace the damaging *Issues of Human Sexuality* with new pastoral guidance, as they said in their *Living in Love and Faith* response.
- for those who are called to ordination in same-sex civil marriages to be able to be ordained, and for clergy to be able to marry a same-sex partner.

Clergy welfare

- for the **working hours of clergy to be taken seriously**, so that fewer are affected by burnout, and for restrictions on the number of parishes clergy are responsible for so they can give proper time to helping their churches and communities to grow.

A church which is inclusive, safe, fair and looks to the future

- for an **inclusive** church which celebrates and affirms every person, and does not discriminate on grounds of disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality.
- for a **fair** church which streamlines administration and promotes equity between dioceses, and which **channels funding towards stipendiary clergy** and parishes on the ground.
- for a church which **priorities mission to young people**, involves them in all aspects of decision making and reflects their concerns about the environment, inclusion and trust in church leaders.
- for safeguarding procedures to be implemented **which are independent** of diocesan bishops.

'I am supporting Mark Hopkins for election to General Synod because of his clear commitment to issues of inclusivity. Mark is passionate about working hard to make the Church a more inclusive institution. His passion is grounded in lived experience of issues of inclusivity which are of concern to him on a local, national and global level.'

Revd Sonya Wratten, Vicar of Reading Minster

Thank you for reading my electoral statement. If you would like to contact me I would be happy to hear from you.

Revd Mark Hopkins, 1 St James Close, Pangbourne, Reading, RG8 7AP.

Email: rector@ptschurches.gmail.com