

Election Address to the General Synod House of Laity

The parish sits at the heart of Christian life in the community. I want to highlight the pressures many parishes are facing and the questions these raise for the future of local church life.

Too many clergy are leaving because of overwork and job insecurity. Many benefices, some comprising as many as seven churches, are being led by lay people and retired clergy. The number of new ordinands is not keeping pace with the number of clergy leaving. How will it be possible to maintain a church in every community in the future? This is one of the questions I would ask if elected to the General Synod.

Parish life and local challenges

As an organist who plays in many different churches, I know this question is on many people's minds.

- How can we maintain church buildings and pay for their upkeep?
- How can churches continue to serve their local communities?

Children, families and church connection

Through my teaching experience in secondary schools, I have seen that many children have little or no connection with a church.

Changing Sunday routines

For many families, Sunday mornings are now more likely to be spent in activities outside church, such as:

- choir practice;
- sports clubs;

- Scouts or Guides; or
- time in a coffee shop with parents.

These activities can be valuable, but they can also reduce children's opportunities to meet others and build friendships through church life.

Why I wish to serve

I know the General Synod must address many important concerns. For me, however, the parish is central to the life of the Church, and it is the reason I wish to stand for election and represent the House of Laity.