

Phil Mann

General Synod Election Address



A hopeful Church, centered on Jesus, confident in mission

I am standing for General Synod because I believe passionately in the Church of England and, even more importantly, in the good news of Jesus Christ.

I believe this is a significant moment for our Church. There are real challenges before us, but I am convinced that we should approach the future not with fear, but with **hope**. The Church of England has an extraordinary opportunity to rediscover its confidence in Jesus, to serve our communities and to see more people encounter the transforming love of God.

For the past nine years, I have had the privilege of serving as Lead Minister at **St Werburgh's Derby**, where our vision is to build *"an authentic community, which is Christ centered, that plays our part in the transformation of the city and beyond."* That vision has shaped how I lead and what I believe the Church is called to be.

A Church centered on Christ

I want to see a Church of England that puts Jesus at the heart of everything we do. Our buildings, structures, strategies and processes all have their place, but our primary calling is to proclaim Christ, make disciples and see lives transformed by the Holy Spirit. I want to contribute to a General Synod that keeps asking: **Does this help the Church become more faithful to Jesus and more effective in making him known?**

A Church confident in mission

I have seen first-hand the difference that happens when a local church becomes outward-looking. At St Werburgh's we have sought to prioritise evangelism, welcoming students and young adults, developing leaders, serving our city and planting new churches. I have become increasingly convinced that church planting and revitalisation need to be central to the future of the Church of England.

We need churches that are **inviting, welcoming, serving and sending** — churches that expect God to change lives. I want to be a voice for a Church that is not simply trying to preserve what we have, but asking God to help us reach people we have not yet reached.

A Church that can disagree well

I also believe we need leaders who can hold strong convictions while remaining committed to Christlike relationships. The Church of England is a broad church, and we will not always agree.

But disagreement does not have to mean division, suspicion or the inability to work together. I want to contribute with humility, conviction and a willingness to listen. I want to defend what I believe to be true while treating those with whom I disagree with dignity and respect.

A Church that serves the local church

I would particularly want to bring the perspective of the local church to General Synod. Synod decisions ultimately have to work in the real world — in churches seeking to reach their neighbourhoods, supporting families, discipling young people, caring for those in need, appointing leaders, managing buildings and finances, and proclaiming the gospel week by week. We need structures that **serve the mission of the local church**, rather than structures that become an end in themselves.

Why me?

I am not standing because I think I have all the answers. I am standing because I care deeply about Jesus, his Church and the people we are called to serve. I bring experience of local church leadership, church planting, mission, leadership development and working across different parts of the Church. My friends describe me as good company and good at peace keeping – qualities that might well be needed at Synod in the next few years.

I have seen both the incredible potential of the Church of England and some of the things that can hold us back. I would seek to bring to General Synod:

- **A passion for Jesus and the gospel**
- **A commitment to the local church and parish mission**
- **Experience of church growth, planting and revitalisation**
- **A heart for developing the next generation of leaders**
- **A commitment to orthodox Christian faith and the authority of Scripture**
- **A relational approach that seeks to listen, build bridges and work collaboratively**
- **A determination to see the Church of England become more confident in mission**

I believe the Church of England has a future. Not because our structures are strong enough, or because we can manage our way out of our challenges, but because **Jesus is still building his Church**.

I would be honoured to serve on General Synod and to play my part in helping us become a Church that is more deeply rooted in Christ, more confident in the gospel, more committed to making disciples and more courageous in joining God in the transformation of our communities and our nation.

I would be grateful for your vote.