

Revd Adam Robertson

Rector of St Ann's, Manchester

Election Address — General Synod, House of Clergy



Why I am standing

I am standing for General Synod because I care deeply about the flourishing of clergy — here in Manchester and across the Church of England. I love being a priest, but we all know ministry can be demanding, sometimes lonely and often complex.

The evidence matters. Manchester Diocese's own research found that 87% of clergy enjoyed their ministry in the Diocese. Yet Clergy Support Trust has supported more than **one in five serving Church of England ministers** in each of the last three years. Behind those statistics are colleagues whom we know.

I don't think the answer is simply to ask clergy to become more resilient and self-sufficient. **I believe the Church itself needs to become better at helping clergy flourish.**

That means good formation and pastoral supervision, better preparation for incumbency especially first incumbencies, support for curates and Training Priests, opportunities for coaching and development, manageable workloads, financial security, support leading up to and after retirement, and attention to spiritual wellbeing.

The question I particularly want to bring to Synod is:

What enables our hard-working and dedicated clergy to flourish throughout a lifetime of ministry — and how do we best enable and support this?

I believe flourishing clergy, healthy parishes and church growth are intimately connected.

What I bring

I was ordained in 2020 at Manchester Cathedral and served my curacy in inner city Beswick, Manchester. Since 2024 I have been Rector of St Ann's in Manchester city centre, where we are seeing encouraging growth, particularly among younger adults, and offer a truly broad, middle Anglican tradition of varied churchmanship and a warm welcome to all.

Alongside parish ministry, I am an Associate Diocesan Director of Ordinands, a member of Diocesan Synod and the Diocesan Giving Steering Group, and a clergy representative and Standing Committee member on Deanery Synod. I am Training Priest to three curates,

supervise four Readers in training and help facilitate Manchester's development programme for Training Priests. I am also an approved Spiritual Companion, currently accompanying six clergy, four of whom minister in other dioceses.

Before ordination I spent more than thirty years in business leadership and consultancy, specialising in organisational development, culture change and leadership development. I have an MBA in Strategic Development as well as coaching, counselling, psychometric assessment, and project management qualifications.

An independent and unifying voice

I am standing as a genuinely **independent candidate**. I strongly support greater investment in local parishes and clergy, while also supporting strategic investment, including Resource Churches. The same independence shapes my approach to some of the more contested questions facing the Church. I have friends and colleagues from varied traditions who have deeply held convictions on different sides of the debate about human sexuality. I respect all of those convictions, but I am not standing to campaign in this matter for either side.

For the sake of transparency, **if elected I intend to abstain on Synod votes specifically concerning contested questions of human sexuality**. I hope instead to listen carefully across the traditions of the Church and work collegiately and respectfully with all.

I recognise that, for some clergy, questions of human sexuality will understandably determine their first preference, and they may wish to give that vote to a candidate who shares their convictions. If that is you, I would simply ask you to consider giving me **as high a subsequent preference as you feel able**, so that I might make the case for something I believe can unite us across our differences: **the flourishing of clergy and the parishes we serve**.

If elected

I will listen to and support clergy from each and every tradition across Manchester Diocese, communicate what is happening at Synod, represent the concerns I hear and work constructively all. I would seek to join the relevant Synod Standing Committees and Boards as well as speak in the chamber.

Above all, I want to make the case that **the flourishing of our clergy is fundamental to the flourishing of our parishes, the growth of our churches, the mission of the Church of England and ultimately the growth of the Kingdom of God**.

I would be very grateful for your vote and would be happy to discuss this, or any other matter you may wish to raise. Please contact me at **rector@stannsmanchester.com** or **07710 539257**.