

Election Address for General Synod 2026 Rev Paul Pritchard SCP



Proposer: Rev Michaila Roberts, Hulme Lecturer & Associate Vicar, Benefice of St Peter & St Philip, Bolton Le Moors
Seconded: Rev Dean Stott, Pioneer Curate, Shaw & Crompton and Thornham Mission Community

I ask for your support as I stand for the House of Clergy General Synod elections 2026. This is the first time I have stood, and I do so with energy, enthusiasm and great hope for the future of the Church of England. I approach the elections also with a great sense of responsibility and an awareness of the privilege that comes with being a member of synod.

Who I am:

Greater Manchester is well and truly my home, and I am very proud Mancunian, though I probably can't properly call myself a 'Manc' as I was born in Stoke-on-Trent. I am 53 years old and am in a civil partnership with Mark, my partner of 24 years. We have a grown-up daughter Sophie and two grandchildren, George and Sofia, who are the lights of our lives. We also have a rather grumpy but beautiful cat called Thomas (Aquinas).

My first vocation was to nursing and I entered the health care profession at the age of 16 where I embarked on a wonderfully fulfilling 30-year career which drew to a close when I was ordained. I'm a cradle Anglican but church was for many years a difficult place as the narrative I heard was that it didn't want people like me! That changed when in my late 30s I found a wonderfully affirming and inclusive church where my faith in Jesus was nurtured and encouraged. After being supported to discern a call to ordination, in 2018 I began training part time with All Saints.

I was ordained Deacon in 2021 and Priest in 2022 and served my title full time in Shaw & Crompton and Thornham within the deanery of Oldham & Ashton and am now Incumbent of East Crompton St James with St Saviour and Holy Trinity Shaw. It is also my joy, along with two other clergy colleagues, to lead Village Church which is an informal Manchester Diocese chaplaincy to the LGBTQIA+ community which meets for worship twice each month.

When I'm not working or looking after George and Sofia, I do a bit of running and enjoy walking, especially along the canals. I also like to cook and always have a few books 'on the go'.

What is important to me:

I love the Church of England, but I love Jesus more! I say this because I worry the church often forgets that it is the love of him that is the beginning, middle and end and without his rootedness, it is nothing! The commandment to love one another as Jesus loves us is what guides my day-to-day life

and relationships. I believe that in our discourse about the many issues that affect the church and the world, love must be the litmus test, and where we find it difficult to love, we need to pray more and try harder.

The breadth of the Church of England is one of its greatest strengths, but to make that work we need to be rooted in love. This is challenging for me, and I know challenging for many others who find our lives and identities marginalised or at the centre of often unkind debates. If I am elected to General Synod, I will do all I can to encourage kinder conversation and greater understanding.

I stand for:

1. **Radical Inclusion** – a church where everyone feels they have a place and no individual or group is pushed to the margins. I am a huge supporter of the ‘Inclusive Church Network’ and am committed to their challenge of discrimination on the grounds of disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neuro diversity or sexuality. I will speak out on these issues and will support individuals and groups who are being discriminated against.
2. **Flourishing Parishes** – I am a parish priest, and I truly believe we must do all we can to enable parish ministry to flourish so that Christ’s love is in action where people live, work and study. In what seems to be an increasingly polarised world, the parish church has an amazing opportunity to encourage collaboration. I will do what I can to resist the dilution of the centrality of the parish system and encourage new and exciting ways of being the parish church.
3. **Climate Justice** – we have to be more active in global climate justice which starts with action at home. Supporting national and local initiatives working towards ‘net zero’ is an imperative and I will always support motions that move the church and our communities to be more proactive in this area.
4. **Well-being** – I think the wellbeing of clergy, lay leaders, church officers and volunteers is central to Christ’s love in action. Burnout is a real and present threat for many people which is a travesty on an individual level but also puts the future of the church at risk. I wish to be part of a synod that has health and wellbeing (as well as safeguarding) as a core concern.
5. **Honouring the faithful** – I am completely committed to ‘growing younger’ and have a very active ministry with schools, young people and families; they are our future and thank God for it. However, I believe we must be intentional in honouring the faithful who have been the bedrock of church life for decades and as dementia and other age-related diseases increase, the church must be more active in its care and concern for seniors.

The Church of England must be the church of radical love where all can find a place. Please vote for me and other inclusive candidates in at least your votes 1 to 6.

I will be very happy to hear from you if you would like to get in touch. My email address is fatherpaul@sctchurch.org and my phone number is 07561 471185.

Every blessing

Paul