

- **Registered Nurse working at Manchester Royal Infirmary (2003-present)**

- **Member, Churchwarden and Treasurer of Christ Church, Moss Side**

- **Treasurer at The Church of the Ascension, Hulme**

- **Manchester Diocesan Lay Chair (2024-present)**

- **Member of General Synod (2015-2021)**

Canon Philip Geldard



Thank you for taking the time to read this election address. I am standing for General Synod to serve our Diocese and ensure that the experiences of our parishes and lay people are heard in discussions shaping the future of our Church.

Who am I?

I have been a member of the Church of England all my life. In my childhood parish, I was a member of my local Deanery Synod and Durham Diocesan Synod for six years. I participated in running the local church youth group as well as being a member of the **Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade** (CLCGB) for over 20 years. I was subsequently appointed by General Synod as the Church of England representative on the **CLCGB National Council**, a position which I held for three years. This experience taught me the value of children's involvement within the Church and how to do this in a collaborative and safe way.

I have been a member of Manchester South & Stretford (previously Hulme) **Deanery Synod** for 15 years and have served as Deanery Secretary and latterly Deanery Budget Secretary. I was elected to **Manchester Diocesan Synod in 2012** and have been a member since. I have served as a member of **Bishop's Council** in the Diocese of Manchester for eight years and was elected as the **Diocesan Chair of the House of Laity in 2024**, prior to that I served as the Vice-Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance. I was extremely honoured when Bishop David appointed me as a Lay Canon of Manchester Cathedral in 2024. I have enjoyed these offices, especially the experience of getting to know lots of different people across the Church's traditions and viewpoints.

I have been a governor at Armitage CE Primary School since 2004. I am currently **Chair of Governors of the Aiming High (CE) Primary Federation** based in Ardwick and Gorton. I have a strong passion for the **education of our children**, especially as so many children across our Diocese are educated in our wonderful church schools. We must ensure all our children are given the best opportunities possible to become aware of and ready to face the wider world after education. I passionately believe that the values and beliefs taught in our church schools help prepare them for life and instil in them the love and compassion of Jesus.

Why General Synod?

I represented our Diocese on **General Synod from 2015 - 2021**. I found being a member interesting, rewarding, educational and sometimes difficult. During this time, I was an active participant and spoke on issues including healthcare, youth work, finance, and Synod organisation. Whilst I was a member of General Synod there were a number of important issues which were discussed including a document entitled "**Setting God's People Free**" which looked at the **role of the laity** in the Church of England and how they are being encouraged to live out the Gospel message within their normal lives every day of the week.

During my time on Bishop's Council and now as Diocesan Lay Chair, I have regularly spoken about the role and position of laity within the Church of England and championed their gifts. I am positive we can make a difference to the mission and ministry of our church as lay people, especially with declining clergy numbers. Lay membership, participation, and leadership are crucial within the Church of England (especially at parish level) and within the governance structures of the church. I believe that this lay participation should be maintained and strengthened as the laity make up the majority of members of the church.

Issues Facing the Church of England

During the last term of General Synod, one of the main items which was discussed on a regular basis was **"Living in Love and Faith"** which looked at the subject of same-sex relationships. This continues to be a very controversial subject, with views varying across the Church of England. I engaged in the discussions during my time as a member of General Synod and have since followed the debates with interest. It is **vital we listen** to the views of others across the Church of England and respect their experiences which have shaped their views.

I am extremely committed that there is, and always should be, a fully active place within the Church of England for those who are LGBTQIA+ and may or may not be in a same-sex relationship. **I fully support the "Prayers of Love and Faith"** which were published during the last few years and have been used in many parishes across the Church of England.

During a reflection early in her role as Archbishop of Canterbury, Archbishop Sarah spoke about the important place of the parish within the church; **I am fully committed to our parish system** which has been described as **"the heart of the Church of England"** and has been for many centuries. I can also understand the need for more original ways of imagining how the church may reach out to those who do not attend our parish churches, but I feel that this must be in addition to our parish system. With my experience worshipping and fulfilling many roles across multiple parishes in different contexts, I would be able to bring this experience to bear and ensure that views and voices from across the Church's parishes are heard.

There are several other issues the Church of England is facing. One of the most important of these is **safeguarding** within the church. During the next term, the General Synod will look to approve new safeguarding arrangements; it is **vital we get it right!** We must remember that safeguarding is at the heart of the Christian faith and Gospel message. I would look forward to getting involved in debates on this important subject, using my experience within healthcare, the CLCGB and with our excellent church schools.

My Commitment

If elected, I hope I could bring my knowledge and experience of church governance, healthcare, and education, along with God's guidance, to help me participate in the decisions facing the Church of England.

To be able to previously represent our Diocese on General Synod was a tremendous honour which I hope with your support I will be able to undertake for the forthcoming five-year term.

I would be extremely grateful if you would lend me **your first or second preference vote**, so I can represent our Diocese of Manchester in the national arena.

Yours in Christ,

Philip Geldard

Proposed by Jeff Dunkerley (Lay Chair of Manchester South and Stretford Deanery)

Seconded by Linda Parkington (Member of Bolton Deanery)