

I was ordained in Southwark Diocese in 2008 and since then have served in Guildford, Worcester and now Worcester Diocese. I am currently the Vicar of Eccleshall and in the midst of my third incumbency.

I am passionate about Parish Ministry and what it takes to grow a flourishing and fulfilled Christian community. Whilst I would position myself somewhere in the Liberal Catholic space in the Church of England, my own churchgoing experience has been much more varied, and I am less interested in labels but more in effectiveness. I believe in curating engaging sacramental worship services, but I'm also comfortable in leading the worship band at our school congregation (currently number 55 children). I would therefore probably be better described in that now not-used-too-often word "central".

I'm standing for General Synod as I have a long background in Ecclesiastical Law (I've been a member of the Ecclesiastical Law Society for 18 years) and I think that its imperative that Synod creates good legislation which is well thought out and considered. I have seen too often over my time in ordained ministry - well-meaning legislation moved through Synod which then results in unforeseen problems. I'd like to play a small part in reducing those problems and creating systems that enable parishes and chaplaincies to flourish, rather than be stifled or prevented from doing good ministry.

I also undertake a fair amount of Academic research. My initial research was on the costs of Church Growth, and whilst I am pretty encyclopaedic about Church Growth techniques, I'm also mindful that growth needs to be managed carefully and sensitively or it can become quite destructive. My current research though is in the field of reconciliation and conflict transformation, and I'm in the middle of a PhD creating a new programme for training clergy to deal with conflict in parish ministry. With this in mind, I'm particularly interested in how I could contribute to creating dialogue, deep listening and understanding at Synod. There have been moments when the debate has become a series of polarising statements rather than a genuine opportunity to engage - again, I'd like to play a small part in making dialogue happen.

Finally, I have been disabled since the age of 13 with a complex spinal disease, and have had to repeatedly adapt myself to the demands of Parish Ministry over the years. Whilst we have made progress on inclusion over the last few decades, I would like to continue that progress by offering (along with colleagues) the lived experience of disability to General Synod and ensuring that multiple voices are heard.

My goal by standing as a representative of the Diocese of Lichfield at General Synod, is not to advance my personal view of the Church of England, but to represent all who work in this Diocese to further God's kingdom. I will commit myself to listening and engaging across all traditions of the church and helping to craft good legislation and contributing to debates. I would be grateful for your vote.

**The Revd Phillip Johnson**