

An invitation to vote for

# PHILIP PLYMING

to represent Guildford Diocese in General Synod



## How I have served so far...

It has been my privilege to serve on the General Synod for the past six years, and I hope I have made a positive contribution in the following ways.

I have always sought to give the perspective of a **parish priest working on the front-line**. I have done this through speaking in debates and also through serving on the **Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee**, to which I was elected in 2011. I have been one of only two parochial clergy on that committee, and so have had to work hard to ensure that the financial realities of stipendiary clergy are clearly understood. I have never shirked from doing this!

I have consistently sought to raise the **profile of mission** within the life of the Synod. I proposed some key amendments so that a motion on a **national mission strategy**, the forerunner of the Reform and Renewal agenda, was passed. I was, therefore, thankful to be asked to serve on the **Archbishops' Simplification Task Group**, where I played an active role ensuring that mission priorities shaped the legislative changes being considered.

I have been a **hardworking member** who has served in whatever ways asked of me. I have been the Secretary of the Evangelical Group of General Synod, the largest grouping within Synod. I was asked to present a paper to a Business Committee residential on better ways for Synod to work. I served on the Crown Nominations Commission for one episcopal vacancy. And I **tweet regularly** during Synod so followers can get a sense of what is going on!

Above all, I have gone out of my way to **listen** to those who see things differently to me, for example by attending carefully to all the views expressed at meetings of the Synod Human Sexuality Group. I have always found these conversations helpful and believe that General Synod, for all its imperfections, is still a key place where the church can listen to God and one another.

## The next five years

I am hugely encouraged by the **Reform and Renewal agenda** initiated by Archbishop Justin. For the first time I think the national Church is facing up to some of the key challenges facing us in terms of mission, evangelism, discipleship and the resourcing they need. I am looking forward to making a positive contribution to these debates going forward so that the mission of our Church can flourish for the glory of God.

In particular, I hope that the **Resourcing Ministerial Education** review will lead to a more flexible model of vocations and training so that we see an increase in the number of ordinands who are then trained for the realities of frontline parish mission.

I am looking forward to the work of the **Simplification Group** continuing, not least as we digest the responses from parochial clergy and laity about further changes that will make a difference to local churches. I will do all I can to ensure that the church moves from its present culture of risk aversion to stepping out boldly in mission.

It is also inevitable that General Synod will need to engage with questions of **human sexuality** as the Shared Conversations come to their conclusion at Synod in July next year. If re-elected I will bring to these conversations a commitment to listen to scripture and each other, an awareness of my own need for God's grace and a confidence that the historic teaching of the church with regard to sexuality is good for human flourishing. I think it is important that the Synod affirms **the traditional understanding of Christian marriage** while at the same time making clear the **generous welcome of God** to all people of whatever background. There is no doubt that this is going to be a demanding journey but with prayer I believe God can be at work.

I know many other issues will come to the Synod. In reflecting on them I will seek to be faithful to the **historic faith and biblical teaching** of the church but **creative and pioneering** when it comes to the church's mission to our nation.

### **Personal**

A little bit about me. I went to church as a child, but came to a personal faith in Christ while at university. After training at Cranmer Hall I served a curacy in Basingstoke before coming to Claygate as Vicar in 2006. I have been Rural Dean of Emly since 2012 and on Diocesan Synod since 2008.

My own **experience of local churches** is varied: I grew up in a church of catholic tradition and did my curacy in an ecumenical church, before moving to Claygate which has an evangelical tradition.

I am married to Annabelle, a hospice doctor, and we have two school-age boys. I am 41 but could pass for 50...

Some words from colleagues:

**Revd Jeff Wattleby, Rector of St John's Egham and Rural Dean of Runymede** (proposing) *'I commend Philip for General Synod because of the energy and thoughtfulness he brings to ensure that Synod supports the effective mission of the local church. His work on the Simplification Group may not be glamorous – but it will make a profound difference to the people on the front line'*

**Revd Canon Dr Julie Gittoes, Residentiary Canon at Guildford Cathedral** (seconding) *'Philip will bring to General Synod his experience as a parish priest and a deep concern for discipleship and mission which stands at the heart of the 'Reform and Renewal' agenda. Philip is a theologian who demonstrates an attentiveness to Scripture and the capacity to engage with generosity and patience across Anglican traditions. I am pleased to support his nomination.'*

### **Conclusion**

It has been a privilege to represent Guildford Diocese on General Synod over the past six years, and I would be honoured to do so again. I would be grateful for your first preference vote (and if not, your second or third).

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this address with me, please contact me at [philipplyming@holyltrinityclaygate.org.uk](mailto:philipplyming@holyltrinityclaygate.org.uk) @philipplyming, or 01372 463603