

General Synod 2026- Revd William Warren

Describe your Anglican identity in three words.

Reformed, catholic and confessional.

What would be your top three priorities for this coming General Synod if you were elected?

My three priorities would be: resourcing and re-prioritising mission and ministry in the local church; rebuilding trust through greater accountability and transparency in governance; and finding a way forward on marriage and sexuality that takes seriously the Church's deep theological disagreements. I would seek to keep local mission at the heart of Synod's decisions, strengthen trust and accountability, and work for a settlement that combines theological conviction with proper respect for conscience.

What would you bring to the General Synod which will enhance its culture, reputation and work?

This would be my first term on General Synod, so I would have much to learn. However, more than a decade as an incumbent in varied parish contexts has given me frontline experience and a strong commitment to local mission.

As a younger minister, I would also bring the perspective of someone likely to live with the long-term consequences of Synod's decisions. I would seek to contribute with conviction, charity, and a willingness both to speak and to listen.

How best do you think the National Church could use its significant financial resources to further the Five Marks of Mission?

I would direct more of the Church's resources towards sustaining and growing parish mission and ministry, especially where local resources are limited. This should include stipendiary ministry, children's and youth work, church planting and new worshipping communities where appropriate, and removing practical barriers to mission.

We should also assess rigorously whether national programmes and structures genuinely help local churches fulfil the Five Marks of Mission. The national Church should serve the local Church, not the other way around.

What steps do you believe General Synod must take next to ensure robust, independent and transparent safeguarding practices across every level of the Church?

The Church's safeguarding failures have caused profound harm and seriously damaged trust. Safeguarding must therefore be genuinely independent where necessary, transparent and accountable, with clear responsibilities, appropriate external scrutiny, proper support for victims and survivors, and processes that are rigorous and fair.

Synod must also ensure reforms work in practice. The goal is not simply new structures, but a culture in which concerns are heard, abuse is acted upon and those in authority are accountable.

What is your vision for the rural church and how should its life and mission be supported?

My direct experience of deeply rural multi-parish ministry is limited, although serving as a rural dean has given me some understanding of its pressures.

Small and overlooked places matter deeply to God, and rural churches have distinctive opportunities for sustained Christian presence and witness. They are not simply smaller versions of large gathered churches.

We should reduce unnecessary administration, support clergy and lay leaders serving multiple parishes, encourage appropriate collaboration, and make the most of opportunities through schools, community life, occasional offices and long-term relationships. The aim should be not merely to manage decline, but to help rural churches share the gospel faithfully and sustainably in their context.

What do you believe the Church's role is at this time of climate crisis?

Care for creation is part of our Christian calling and of the Five Marks of Mission. The Church should model responsible stewardship and speak into the wider culture about how we value and use the created world. At the same time, environmental commitments should be realistic and not unintentionally undermine other aspects of mission and ministry.

Christian concern for creation should ultimately be rooted in hope in the God who made and sustains the world and calls us to care for it faithfully.

In light of the Church of England's From Lament to Action report, and recognising increasing polarisation in UK public life around nationalism, identity and migration, what would your contribution be to fostering racial diversity and challenging discrimination in our Church?

As a white male incumbent of a majority-white congregation, I recognise that I have much to learn and would listen carefully to Christians from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The gospel is for people of every nation and background, and I long for the Church of England increasingly to reflect that reality. I would support removing unjust barriers to participation and leadership, challenging racial discrimination, and ensuring that ethnic minority Christians and the global Church are genuinely heard. I believe this is best grounded in our shared identity in Christ.

What are your views on Project Spire, the Church Commissioners' findings about transatlantic chattel slavery and the proposal to create a fund for healing, repair and justice?

Transatlantic chattel slavery was a grave evil with consequences lasting for generations. I understand Project Spire as an attempt to acknowledge that history and respond tangibly. However, significant questions have been raised about the historical case, the fund's scale and purpose, and how its money would be used. I would want these answered transparently before giving the project unequivocal support.

Repentance for past wrongs should be serious and meaningful, but grounded in careful historical work, proper accountability and confidence that resources will achieve genuine good.

What is your view about the sacramental ministry of priests and bishops who are women, and do you personally receive their ministry in full?

I believe all Christians share in the priestly calling of God's people under Christ, while some are called to ordained leadership. I am therefore wary of emphasising ordained ministry at the expense of the ministry of the whole people of God.

Women clergy play a full part in the church where I serve, and I receive episcopal oversight from a woman suffragan bishop. I therefore personally receive the ministry of women as priests and bishops. I also support appropriate provision for those who in conscience cannot do so.

What is your view on the current status of the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests and the Five Guiding Principles?

The present settlement followed considerable discussion and proper synodical process. Although not everyone is satisfied with it, I value its attempt to make space for differing theological convictions held in good conscience. I would therefore prefer to make the existing settlement work well and fairly rather than reopen the fundamental debate without compelling reason.

What is your view about services of blessing in church after a civil same-sex marriage at (i) a usual service, (ii) a standalone service, and (iii) same-sex marriage conducted in churches, in all cases where the incumbent and PCC are supportive?

I remain content to affirm Canon B30's teaching on marriage, which I believe is most faithful to Scripture and the wider Christian tradition. I also take seriously the Anglican principle *lex orandi, lex credendi*: the Church's worship both expresses and shapes its belief.

While clergy should offer generous and sensitive pastoral care to those in same-sex marriages and relationships, I would not support liturgical provision that, in my view, contradicts the Church's stated doctrine of marriage, or where its legality remains contested.

What is your view about the ordination of candidates who are in same-sex marriages, and the licensing of clergy who enter same-sex marriage?

The Ordinal requires clergy both to order their lives according to the way of Christ and faithfully to minister the Church of England's doctrine and discipline. While the Church formally maintains its doctrine of marriage in Canon B30, I believe there is a serious inconsistency in ordaining or licensing clergy whose marital circumstances are contrary to that doctrine.

If the Church wishes to change its expectations of clergy, this should follow an open process of doctrinal and canonical change rather than an indirect change in practice.

How do you plan to communicate and consult effectively with the wider electorate?

If elected, I would represent the clergy of the Diocese of Norwich, not simply my own views. I would communicate regularly before and after significant Synod meetings, invite views from clergy across the diocese, and make myself available by email and for direct conversation.

I would particularly want to hear from those who disagree with me. Representation does not mean always following majority opinion, but it does require careful listening, honest explanation and accountability.