

Candidate: Revd Matthew Price

1. Describe your Anglican identity in three words.

Evangelical; Missional; Generous

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

First, mission and evangelism: keeping the making of disciples at the heart of the Church's life, particularly among children, young people and communities currently under-represented in our churches.

Second, healthy and sustainable parish ministry: ensuring clergy and lay leaders have the resources, capacity and support they need to flourish.

Third, trust and culture: helping the Church become safer, more transparent and more able to disagree well, so that our structures and debates serve rather than distract from our calling to share the good news of Jesus.

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

I would bring the perspective of leading a growing parish church in an estate community, alongside experience at diocesan and national level. Before ordination I was a solicitor, which taught me to listen carefully, weigh evidence and engage constructively with complex questions. I hope I would bring theological conviction alongside generosity towards those with whom I disagree, and a strong instinct to ask how national decisions affect ordinary parishes and the communities we serve. I would seek to contribute thoughtfully, practically and collaboratively, and to help Synod disagree well while keeping our shared mission in view.

4. How best do you think the National Church could use its significant financial resources to further the 5 Marks of Mission?

I would like significantly more of our national resources directed towards frontline mission, particularly in communities where local churches have the fewest financial resources but some of the greatest opportunities and needs. That means investing in parish ministry, children and young people, evangelism, church planting and revitalisation, and Christian service which brings word and action together. Funding should build sustainable local leadership and capacity rather than create long-term dependence. We also need to recognise that mission cannot always be measured quickly: patient investment in local relationships, leadership and discipleship can bear fruit over many years.

5. 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 must ensure safeguarding has sufficient independence, consistency, expertise and transparency to command the confidence of victims and survivors and the wider public. Synod should continue moving towards structures in which scrutiny and key safeguarding functions are independent, while ensuring clear accountability at parish, diocesan and national levels. The experience and voices of victims and survivors must continue to shape the development and evaluation of our systems. We also need a culture in which safeguarding is understood not simply as compliance but as fundamental to Christian ministry: concerns welcomed, poor practice challenged, information shared appropriately, and people properly accountable.

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

My own ministry is urban/estates rather than rural, so I would listen carefully to those who know rural ministry from the inside. I have, however, seen excellent rural ministry within our diocese and my own deanery. Rural churches can offer a vital Christian presence, community and pastoral care, especially in small or isolated communities. We need realistic expectations of clergy, investment in lay leadership and local vocations, imaginative collaboration, and funding which recognises context. National strategy should learn from what is working and enable locally rooted ministry rather than impose one model of church growth.

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

Care for creation belongs within Christian discipleship. The earth is God's creation, entrusted to us, and environmental damage disproportionately affects those who are poorest and most vulnerable. The Church should therefore combine practical action with a distinctively Christian hope: reducing our own environmental impact, using our land and investments responsibly, speaking into public debate, and helping congregations connect everyday choices with discipleship. We should resist both complacency and despair. Christians believe creation matters to God and that our actions matter, while our ultimate hope rests not in ourselves but in the God who makes all things new.

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

I would listen particularly to Christians from UKME and GMH backgrounds and ensure their voices genuinely shape our common life, rather than inviting people into structures whose culture remains unchanged. The Church must challenge racism and discrimination, while resisting public discourse which turns questions of migration, nationality and identity into suspicion of our neighbours. On Synod I would support practical action to widen participation and leadership, listen to lived experience, and help build churches where people of every ethnicity and background know they belong and can contribute fully to the body of Christ.

9. 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?)

The Church should face honestly those parts of its history connected with the terrible injustice of transatlantic chattel slavery and consider what meaningful repair might look like today. I am therefore sympathetic to the aims behind Project Spire. However, significant sums of money are involved, and questions have been raised about the historical evidence, the proposed scale of the fund and how it will be used. Before committing such resources, I would want robust evidence, transparency and clear accountability. Our response should combine repentance and justice with responsible stewardship, ensuring that what we do makes a real and lasting difference.

10. 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 fully affirm the ordained and sacramental ministry of women as priests and bishops and personally receive their ministry without reservation. I am deeply grateful for the gifts, leadership and ministry of women across the Church of England and believe our common life is greatly enriched by them. I also remain committed to the settlement the Church has made for those who, for reasons of theological conviction, reach a different conclusion. I believe we should seek the flourishing of women in ordained ministry while treating those who conscientiously disagree with generosity and respect.

11. 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?

I remain committed to the House of Bishops' Declaration and the Five Guiding Principles. They affirm unequivocally the ordained ministry of women while making lasting provision for those who, from theological conviction, cannot receive that ministry. I believe that settlement should be honoured and its commitment to mutual flourishing taken seriously. More broadly, the Principles offer an important model for a Church facing other profound disagreements: neither pretending our differences do not matter nor requiring uniformity, but seeking the highest possible degree of communion, with generosity, integrity and proper provision for conscience.

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

I hold to the Church of England's historic doctrine of marriage as the lifelong union of one man and one woman. I also recognise the pain experienced by many LGBTQI+ people in the Church and want our

churches to be places of genuine welcome, friendship and pastoral care. I respect the current provision for Prayers of Love and Faith within usual services, alongside freedom of conscience for clergy. Given the recent legal and theological advice, I would not support standalone services or same-sex marriage in church without the full synodical and legislative processes required for changes of that significance.

13. 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?

While the Church's doctrine of marriage remains unchanged, I would not support the ordination or licensing of clergy in same-sex marriages. I recognise that faithful Christians reach deeply held but different conclusions, and that these questions concern real people, relationships and vocations, not simply church policy. Recent legal and theological advice has also clarified the significance of the changes being considered. I therefore believe any change should come through proper synodical and legislative processes, with careful theological scrutiny, attentive listening to those most directly affected, and generous pastoral provision for those who could not conscientiously accept such a change.

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

I would want communication to work both ways, providing regular, accessible updates on significant Synod business and explaining why decisions matter for parishes. Before major debates I would actively seek views from clergy across the diocese, including those whose contexts and theological perspectives differ from mine. I would particularly want to hear from those who disagree with me. I would be available by email and for individual conversations. I cannot represent everyone's opinion, but I would listen carefully, communicate openly and ensure the experience of our parishes informs my contributions at Synod.