

Candidate: Revd Dr Patrick Richmond

1. Describe your Anglican identity in three words.

central reformed catholic

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

My three priorities would be:

Supporting frontline parish ministry and sustainable clergy wellbeing, including fair pay, housing and pensions, while keeping national structures proportionate and effective.

Investing in initiatives that demonstrably foster discipleship, mission and ministry, especially among children and young people, so that local churches are equipped to serve and grow for the long term. Bringing evidence and realism to Synod's decisions, facing honestly the demographic, financial and ministerial pressures ahead so that resources and structures match the Church's actual circumstances.

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

I bring more than fifteen years of General Synod experience, theological and philosophical rigour and experience of parish ministry. I try to test proposals carefully, offer constructive amendments and distinguish legitimate disagreements from unnecessary division.

I aim to represent views I disagree with fairly, and to listen seriously to people across the Church. My experience as a parish priest and my scientific background also lead me to value evidence, careful reasoning and practical consequences.

I hope that combination of experience, charity and intellectual analysis can help Synod to disagree well and earn greater public trust.

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

National resources should strengthen the Church's mission on the ground, directly furthering the Five Marks of Mission - especially proclaiming the Gospel and making disciples. We should protect sustainable frontline ministry, respond to population growth and deprivation, support ministry among children and young people, and help dioceses facing serious financial and clergy shortages. Since stipendiary clergy numbers will likely fall, with retirements exceeding ordinations, we also need investment in training, local leadership, interim ministry and sustainable patterns of pastoral oversight. Funding should be judged by its impact on mission, while keeping administrative burdens on parishes as low as possible.

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?

Synod's next step should be delivering safeguarding that is genuinely independent, transparent and trauma-informed at every level, with clear separation between safeguarding scrutiny and those managing the Church's wider operations, and effective external accountability.

The Redress Scheme must offer independent investigation and decision-making, so survivors are never asked simply to trust the institutions that failed them.

Synod should also ensure conduct complaints unrelated to safeguarding - such as toxic behaviour by lay officers, for whom no disciplinary route currently exists - have a proper route of their own, so dedicated safeguarding staff can focus fully on genuine cases.

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

The rural church remains a vital spiritual and community presence, but many rural parishes face ageing congregations, historic buildings, financial pressures and fewer volunteers.

We need both realism and imagination: not every parish can sustain the same pattern of stipendiary ministry indefinitely, yet our presence matters greatly, especially where no other local church exists. National investment through the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment programme - including the Diocesan Investment Programme and Lowest Income Communities Funding - should support sustainable patterns of pastoral oversight, local lay leadership, and the realistic stewardship of church buildings as assets for ministry and community.

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

As a scientifically literate theologian, I recognise creation care as the Fifth Mark of Mission with a clear biblical mandate. Environmental degradation also disproportionately harms the vulnerable and so is relevant to the third and fourth marks.

The Church should therefore lead by example through responsible stewardship of its buildings, land and investments, while helping parishes make realistic progress towards greater sustainability. National policy should be evidence-based and financially realistic. We should avoid imposing unfunded expectations on already stretched parishes, and instead combine credible climate science with Christian hope, stewardship and practical and campaigning action.

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?

Racism is sin, incompatible with the Christian conviction that every person bears God's image and our unity in Christ. I voted for *From Lament to Action* and support practical measures to remove unnecessary barriers to participation, vocation and leadership for people from UKME and GMH backgrounds. I want us to listen carefully to those who have encountered discrimination, while grounding our response in Christian theology, evidence and universal human dignity. In a polarised culture, the Church can offer something distinctive: refusing prejudice while also seeking truth, listening across disagreement, and building a common identity in 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?

Transatlantic chattel slavery was a grave evil, and the Church is right to take seriously its historic connections with it, which stain our reputation. I therefore fully support the principle of a response

aimed at healing, repair and justice.

At the same time, substantial resources require careful stewardship. Clear evidence, transparent governance, proper accountability and a convincing explanation of how the proposed work will achieve its objectives are all needed.

My concern is therefore not whether the Church should respond, but how best to do so faithfully, effectively and responsibly alongside the urgent financial pressures affecting ministry across the Church.

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 receive and support the sacramental ministry of women as priests and bishops. I voted in favour of the 2014 legislation enabling women to become bishops, and I believe there is a strong biblical case for women exercising leadership and ordained ministry today.

My experience across different Anglican traditions has deepened my appreciation of the gifts women bring to the Church. I remain committed to women flourishing fully in ordained ministry, alongside proper respect for those who continue to hold a different theological position.

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?

The Five Guiding Principles remain part of the settlement by which the Church admitted women to the episcopate, while enabling those unable to receive their ministry on theological grounds to remain and flourish. I voted for that settlement in 2014, believing it offered a principled way of living with theological disagreement within one Church. Whatever our convictions, we should honour commitments made in good faith. I support maintaining the Principles and their commitment to mutual flourishing, while seeking to improve how they function. I hope honest disagreement, pastoral provision and mutual flourishing can inform our approach to current disputes.

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)?

All are loved by God and welcome in our churches. I uphold our present doctrine, reflected in Canon B30, that marriage is male-female. FAOC (GS Misc 1430) highlighted the risk that blessing services may be read as endorsing marriage; the Bishops' commendation doesn't settle that question. FAOC (GS Misc 1406) also found that, for many, the doctrinal disagreement is of first- or second-order significance, with serious implications for communion. Neither side should tell the other how seriously to hold their convictions. As with women's ordination, I'd work for an acceptable, durable settlement, with pastoral provision for theological conscience.

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?

I feel the pain on all sides of this question. I hold, following Canons B30 and C26, that clergy should not be ordained or licensed in a same-sex marriage. FAOC (GS Misc 1431) warned that relaxing this discipline without proper Synodical authorisation risks doctrine and discipline diverging. FAOC (GS Misc 1406) found that, for many, this doctrinal disagreement is of first- or second-order significance,

with serious implications for communion. Neither side should tell the other how seriously to hold their convictions. As with women's ordination, I'd work for an acceptable, durable settlement, with pastoral provision for theological conscience.

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

Synod's own centrally-produced report is now shared directly with Diocesan Synod after each group of sessions, and we answer questions on it, keeping colleagues informed without duplicated effort. I supplement this with deanery chapter conversations and parish reports, and actively seek views before key votes, not just reporting after them. I invite correspondence and listen charitably to all perspectives. Formal reporting only goes so far - I'm always glad to discuss Synod matters personally, and I welcome contact from any elector.