

Revd William Warren Standing for General Synod

Proposed by Revd Canon Stephen Thorp

Seconded by Revd Ian Dyble

I would like to offer myself to serve the Diocese of Norwich, and the wider Church, by standing for election to General Synod.

I was ordained in 2013 and have served throughout my ministry within the Diocese of Norwich. I served my title at Holy Trinity, Norwich, followed by ministry at St Andrew's, Norwich, and then Costessey. In 2018 I was appointed Vicar of Cromer, where I currently serve.

My heart is for the local church and, in many ways, I would rather not stand for Synod! But several people have encouraged me to consider whether experience of ordinary parish ministry is precisely something Synod needs more of. I therefore put myself forward to serve in this way, recognising that this is a significant moment for our Church and for our nation.

There is plenty about the Church of England that frustrates me, but much more that I love. I am an Anglican by conviction rather than convenience. I grew up in a Baptist manse, but it was through experiencing vibrant parish ministry in the Church of England as a student that I discerned a call to ordained ministry.

By God's grace, I have been privileged to see slow and steady growth in every church in which I have served, much of it through the unspectacular and unobtrusive work of faithful weekly parish ministry. I still believe that God wants his Church to flourish. Jesus said, "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it." I am confident that the Lord is able to bless the Church of England and to use us, together with other churches, to reach our nation afresh with the good news of Jesus. But if that is to happen, I believe we need to remain faithful to Scripture, love one another, and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

It also requires the Church of England to give real priority to resourcing and encouraging the local church. If elected, I would do all I can to ensure that the mission and ministry of the parish remain central to Synod's debates, decisions and use of resources.

Other responsibilities

Assistant Rural Dean of Holt and Repps, 2019–21

Rural Dean of Repps, 2022–25

Member of Diocesan Synod

Previously Vice-Chair of Norwich Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship

Family and wider interests

I am married to Claire, a teacher at Norwich School, and we have three children aged 11, 9 and 6. When I am not standing for General Synod, I can usually be found playing or watching sport. Although my rugby days are over, I represent Cromer in the Norfolk Squash League and remain a passionate cricketer when time and opportunity allow.



In a rash moment, I have also signed up to run the Marriott's Way Marathon in February 2027 in aid of Ovarian Cancer Action.

What are the issues facing Synod, and what do I think?

There are many significant issues and challenges facing General Synod during this quinquennium, but three stand out to me.

Mission and the local church- As I hope is clear, I am a passionate supporter of the local church. I long to see churches in every context reaching people with the good news of Jesus and making disciples. Having served as a rural dean in a predominantly rural deanery, I am also well aware of the challenges many churches face in sustaining mission and ministry. I believe we must do all we can to strengthen and encourage local churches, while being realistic about changing patterns of life and open to new forms of church and church planting where these genuinely serve the mission of the gospel. At a time when many parishes and dioceses face significant financial pressure, I want Synod to be rigorous in asking whether our structures, priorities and spending are genuinely enabling frontline mission and ministry. The national Church should serve the local Church, not the other way around.

Trust and accountability- High-profile safeguarding failures across different parts of the Church have caused profound harm to victims and survivors and have rightly led many within the Church and beyond it to question aspects of our culture, leadership and accountability. We must continue to do all we can to ensure that our churches are safe places, where abuse is taken seriously, victims and survivors are heard and supported, and those in positions of authority are properly accountable. More widely, I believe the Church should model governance that is transparent, comprehensible and accountable at every level, reflecting the character of the Christ in whose name we serve.

Human sexuality- I remain personally committed to the Church of England's longstanding teaching on marriage and sexual relationships, as expressed in Canon B30. At the same time, I believe the gospel of Jesus is good news for every person, and I long for our churches to be places of genuine welcome, where all are treated with love and with the dignity that belongs to those made in the image of God. There are no easy solutions to the profound disagreements within the Church of England on these questions. I believe we need to be honest about the depth of our theological differences, resist solutions which simply ignore them, and seek a way forward that is faithful to Scripture, gives proper space to conscience, and enables Christians who disagree profoundly to treat one another with grace.

I hope this gives you a flavour of how I would approach Synod if elected. If you would like to know more, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

I would be very grateful for your support in the election, whether as your first preference or further down your ballot.

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