

John Hoyland

**Lifelong Learning and
Continuing Ministerial Development Advisor,
Diocese of York**

Nominated by: Anika Gardiner

Seconded by: Matt Woodcock



About Me:

Father of two teenagers, owner of one Labrador, fan of cricket, miniature painting, railways and far too many things science fictional and fantastical to mention here. Occasional juggler and fire-breather.

Before Ordination:

I spent most of my working life in customer services and retail management, including a stint as a store manager for Games Workshop in Hull and a period leading the Front of House team at the Yorkshire Museum in York.

Since Ordination:

Title post served in a parish in York which included an LEP, giving me an insight into ecumenical matters. A year spent looking after a church in vacancy, who were going through a difficult time. Currently working as part of the training team in the Discipleship, Mission and Ministry Team for the Diocese of York.

Dear colleague,

I write to you to ask you to vote for me in the upcoming elections for General Synod. The Church of England is very dear to me, and I would cherish the opportunity to serve the church I love in this way. I grew up in the Church of England and, over the years, have worshipped in a variety of the traditions it encompasses. This has given me a valuable lived insight into the spectrum of the Church of England.

I spent my early years in a succession of vicarages across Yorkshire (my father is also an Anglican priest who spent much of his ministry in theological education, so the apple hasn't fallen far from the tree...). I am therefore familiar with the pressures and demands (and joys!) that can be placed on vicarage life from the point of view of both the priest and, importantly, the priest's family.

My parents were of broadly evangelical stock, and my exploration of the faith they nurtured in me has led me to spend time in evangelical churches, in charismatic churches and to have found a home in more recent years in the liberal catholic tradition.

I am drawn, too, to the contemplative. Discovering the Taizé community was one of the most formative times in the development of my faith. Pilgrimage, too, is important to me, and it delights me that both the Church and wider society seems to be rediscovering the immense spiritual riches pilgrimage can offer.

What is Church for?

For me, it is vital that the Church understands that our task is to work to bring about God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. To do this, we are to model to the world a new way of being together, a new way of doing life together: We are called to form a community as God would have it, and as demonstrated for us by life lived as Christ lived. This is the heart of the gospel: The kingdom of God has drawn near, and we are invited to share that kingdom with the world. This works its way out in many ways, and I will highlight three of them which are particularly priorities for me and which, if elected to General Synod, I will seek to advocate strongly for.

My Priorities

Inclusion

I am committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and roles within the church, regardless of disability, economic power, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality.

In some ways, that's everything that needs saying, but perhaps it's worth expanding on a little. It seems to me that one of the primary things that Christ came to do was to break down barriers, to remove divides and to welcome in. Christ's message was clear, and it seemed to captivate St. Paul. The old divides and barriers are gone; the them-and-us mentality that so often characterises human societies and communities is not what God wants. All are welcome and all are valued.

This is not easy for us to live out, but it is, I believe, one of the fundamental ways of being in the world that marks us out as followers of Christ and, whether it is hard work or not, it is work we must do, for the good of the Church and for the good of the world. If elected to General Synod, I will advocate as strongly as I am able for greater inclusion within the Church of England.

Whole Church Ministry

Each and every follower of Christ is called to ministry in some form or another, and one of the great joys of my role within the Lifelong Learning team is to encounter people who are either exploring a call to ministry, or who are currently in formation for ministry. Much of my job role involves theological education, and it is a constant delight to encounter people from so many walks of life who have faithfully answered a call to ministry in one form or another, and who are seeking to deepen their faith and equip themselves for ministry. If elected, I will advocate for rich theological education, and the continuing development of all those called to ministry in its very widest sense.

It is important, too, that the Church learns to flourish in its mixed ecology landscape. I am a huge advocate for the parish system, and believe strongly that it must remain at the heart of who we are as the Church of England. However, I also see the incredible work being done by fresh expressions and new worshipping communities, and would seek way for the familiar and the innovative to flourish together, for the enrichment of the whole people of God.

Creation Care

Humankind bears the image of the creator-God, and bears the responsibility for caring for the creator-God's work. This responsibility calls us to think carefully about the way that we live our lives as individuals, as communities and as a whole Church. Just as the Church should be leading the way in welcome and inclusion, so the Church should be leading the way in caring for the natural world. This requires that we think and act carefully and responsibly when it comes to the ways we invest our money, and the ways we think about how we use our buildings. It also means we have to think responsibly about the use of technologies such as AI. Our response to the climate crisis must affect how we think about refugees and asylum seekers, about global conflicts and about politics, both national and international.

If elected to General Synod, I will advocate wherever I can for both words and actions which look to safeguard the creation, for we are called to work to bring about God's kingdom here, on earth, and in God's kingdom, all creation flourishes.