

JAMES KENNY

*Priest-in-Charge of St Martin w. St Michael
& St Saviour, Scarborough.*

PROPOSED BY: Tom Bates-Bourne,
Vicar of South Thornaby

SECONDED BY: Jenny Rankin
Associate Vicar of AST Church, Hull



WHY AM I STANDING FOR GENERAL SYNOD?

Well honed, balanced, and accountable governance has always been the best way to support the ministry of the Church of England to flourish. This has become evident to me over the last ten years as I have progressed through being in the discernment process, an ordinand, a curate, and now an incumbent in the Diocese of York.

I believe that our General Synod representatives in the House of Clergy should not just be proponents of single issue parties or headline policies, but must

- **know the needs and challenges of the people that they represent,**
- and **not be afraid to ask difficult questions** to challenge, test, and contest (when needed) the proposals brought to the Synod, on behalf of those that they represent.

If elected, I will try to do this as faithfully as I can.



I am standing as a **candidate for Save the Parish** as I believe that the parish system, properly resourced, remains the best way for the Church of England to be **present in every community in this country** and be

- faithful to its inheritance,
- confident in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ,
- and equipped to hand on the faith to future generations.

In short I want to,

- Ensure that **parish churches, rooted in their communities and contexts, retain agency** and meaningful recourse to advocate for their interests within the decision making processes in the local, diocesan, and national church context. This is particularly important for churches facing a vacancy. To do this will mean **paying close attention to the details of all relevant proposals** to examine whether any changes will alter the balance of decision making away from parish representatives, or create legal loopholes that remove parishes from decision making processes.
- Encourage **honesty in how we debate as a church.** The handling of **the LLF process** has caused a lot of distrust across the church. It was evident to many of us from the beginning that the proposals would need a two thirds majority to pass, but it was often presented that it could be progressed through other ways that would not need a majority consensus. In all our debates, and especially on doctrine, we need honesty from all viewpoints about the intended outcomes of the proposals that are put forward, and respect for the integrity of both those who seek change and those, like me, who could not support a departure from our inherited catholic doctrine.

- Advocate for **directing appropriate funding for front line ministry** in order to avoid repeating the expensive experimental SDF (or SMIIB) projects of recent years that come and go (such as Multiply), and to ensure that spending on administration directly supports parish ministry in provable ways. Furthermore we need to **prioritise resourcing ministry to young people** in parish contexts to support clergy in handing on the faith to future generations.
- Campaign to **protect the wellbeing of the clergy** through making sure that posts are not unrealistic in their expectations, that there is appropriate diocesan support in place for the **diverse needs of the clergy**, and that clergy are not overburdened by their duties. There needs to be careful attention to the implementation of the new Clergy Conduct Measure to ensure that it treats clergy fairly and enables appropriate support. The care of our clergy has a great influence on our **nurturing of vocations**, which is so greatly needed in the coming years.
- Establish **manageable governance expectations for clergy and laity** in all legislation that is passed by the General Synod. The church has done a lot of catching up on **safeguarding** at all levels, and more is needed to keep up with national safeguarding requirements and to support survivors of abuse, but we need to ensure that all proposals are workable and not overly burdensome for those in ministry so that we can effectively make the church a safe place for all.

ABOUT ME

I have just turned 30 and I am Priest-in-Charge of three churches in Scarborough, ministering in the midst of a challenging seasonal economy and high deprivation levels, with a Grade I listed building to maintain. Previously I served my curacy in the Weighton Wold Benefice (2021-25), a five-church rural benefice in the East Riding of Yorkshire.

When I trained for ordination at Cranmer Hall, Durham, I was taken out of my Anglo-Catholic comfort zone and placed in the midst of substantive engagement with people from other traditions and approaches within the CofE. This contextualised my understanding of my place as an Anglo-Catholic within the wider CofE whilst remaining open to challenging my own assumptions, contributing to debates with people from different theological perspectives, and always looking to what we can agree on despite our differences. This set me up well for ministry and has informed my commitment to contributing thoughtfully to debates across differing viewpoints and traditions within the church; where it is essential to retain an open mind and reflect prayerfully together.

In other words, as the Church we need to **honour integrity, debate with respectful honesty, and still be able to work together at the end of the day**. This is essential in faithfully committing ourselves to live out our calling as the Church to be made one in Christ; recognising both what we have in common amongst our differences, and our commitment to that one shared mission of God's church.

Thank you for taking the time to read this election address. I would be grateful for your support with your first, or high preference, vote. If elected, I want to assure you that I would seek to represent all of the Clergy of the Diocese of York as faithfully as I can. There are many other issues for the General Synod to consider than those above; if you would like to get in touch, my email address is rev.jakenny@gmail.com.