

GENERAL SYNOD ELECTION ADDRESS

**Candidate:**

The Venerable David Gerrard
Archdeacon of Sheffield and
Rotherham

Nominator 1:

The Venerable Javaid Iqbal
Archdeacon of Doncaster

Nominator 2:

The Revd. Dr Dan Christian
Director of Vocations and
Diocesan Director of Ordinands

Personal Background

I am married to Carole, a Primary School Teacher, and we have two daughters, Sarah and Anabel. In my spare time I enjoy music, long walks, reading and all things science fiction!

Career and Ministry

After graduating with a joint degree in History, Professional Development and Primary Education I spent 5 years working as a Primary School teacher. After being called to ordination I trained at Trinity College in Bristol and then served my curacy in the Parish of St Anne's, Shevington in the Diocese of Blackburn from 2012. In 2014 I completed my MPhil in the area of Biblical Studies.

In 2016 I became the Priest-in-Charge of the United Benefice of St Catherine's, Belle Vue and St Andrew's and St Mary's, Wakefield; inner city, multicultural parishes with high levels of deprivation. In 2019 I became the Area Dean of Wakefield and in 2023 I took on the role of Project Lead of the SDF funded 'Every Good Work' Project.

In 2025 I was appointed as the Archdeacon of Sheffield and Rotherham. Since then I have endeavoured to serve the churches across the Diocese and offer support and encouragement. I believe an Archdeacon can offer a unique perspective on the General Synod and I would be grateful for your consideration.

Areas of Interest

Young people: Before ordination I was a Primary School teacher and since ordination I have continued to do a lot of work in the field. This included leading the 'Every Good Work' Project, which works with young people cross the city of Wakefield, engaging them in social action and discipleship. I am convinced that our churches need young people. We need to be hearing their voices and perspectives, as well as helping them to grow in their discipleship.

Creating a Safe Church: I believe the church has to be a safe place for children, vulnerable people and also clergy. As the Bishop's Lead for Safeguarding in the diocese I support the continued reviewing and reforming our Safeguarding practices. Likewise, I support the continued review of the Clergy Discipline Measure. Many people have been hurt and it is important to do all we can to prevent this in the future.

Poverty: Until recently I served in a parish placed in the bottom 5% of the country in terms of social deprivation. We ran two community centres, seeking to help in the areas of food poverty, social isolation, mental health, education and more. We ran a fresh expression of church reaching out to people struggling with homelessness, addiction issues, mental health struggles and other areas of need. I am passionate about calling the Church of England to be in the poorest areas. Instead we are often closing churches and withdrawing from the most deprived areas of our country. The same could be said for the disparities in wealth across dioceses. If we are to be the body of Christ, we must not allow this to unthinkingly happen.

Mission and Ministry: In a turbulent and divided world the call to proclaim the Gospel is more important than ever. The decisions made at General Synod, including how resources are allocated across the Church of England, are vital if we are to be effective in sharing the Gospel. The call to pray, the call to evangelism and the call to be the body of Christ in each community should remain the core of all we do.

Disability and Neurodiversity: My eldest daughter has a genetic muscle condition called 'McArdle's Disease', a rare and often hidden disability. She lacks the enzyme which allows glycogen to be broken down into energy to be used by her muscles. My youngest daughter is diagnosed with Autism, making new situations and overstimulating environments difficult for her. As such, the call to make our churches open, welcoming and inclusive to people with disabilities and neurodiversity is deeply personal to me. Our church should be places where all people can come and encounter the living God.

Witness: The Church of England has a long standing role in speaking into the public square. There are numerous areas in our culture into which the church should be speaking with a clear voice. For example, the renewed assisted dying bill currently passing through parliament, to which the church has a critical role in proclaiming the sanctity of human life. The General Synod has a role to play in speaking clearly into these national debates.

Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to read this Election Address. I would be honoured if you would consider giving me your vote and to be your representative at General Synod. Please do contact me if you would like a further conversation and I would be grateful if you could give me your vote.

Contact Details

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