

## **General Synod Election Address**

### **The Reverend Will Sweeney Plympton Team Ministry**

Proposer: The Revd Preb Robert Harris  
Team Rector of the Plympton Team Ministry

Seconder: The Revd Charles Keay  
Team Vicar of the Parish of St Thomas, Exeter.



#### **Who am I?**

My name is Will, I am 28 years old, and since September 2017 I have been serving within the Plympton Team Ministry as Associate Priest (Team Vicar designate). I am married to Minnie, we have a 14 month old daughter called Natasha and a black Labrador called Louis. When time permits I like to travel, cook and watch films as well as spending time with family and friends. I grew up in a middle to high church setting, I trained for parish ministry at an evangelical college (St John's, Nottingham), and I am now a Priest serving in an Anglo-Catholic church. Therefore, I strongly feel that although I have my preferences in worship and specific understanding of theology, I appreciate and comprehend all styles of worship and theological interpretation.

#### **Why am I a Church of England Priest?**

Since birth I have been brought up within the tradition of the Church of England. At the age of 7 I joined my Church's choir and aged 11, shortly after confirmation, I began to feel a calling to ordained ministry. What I have always appreciated the most about the Church of England is its diversity in both its traditions and theological understandings. If you say to someone that you are an Anglican it doesn't tell them very much about you as you are part of a Christian denomination that encompasses both catholic and evangelical, liberal and conservative and everything in-between. The Church of England is very much unique in this and that is why I proudly serve my local community as a Church of England Priest.

## **Why would I like the opportunity to represent the Diocese of Exeter at General Synod?**

Shortly after starting my curacy I began to observe Diocesan Synod meetings, with the view of joining Diocese Synod. I was later elected to serve on Diocesan Synod and have done so until I moved to Plymouth earlier this year. All synods within the Church of England play a vital role in not only discussing issues that the Church faces today, but through discussions and debates path the way for the future of the Church of England. It is through Synod discussions and debates that important decisions (sometimes not easy decisions) are reflected upon and made. As a young Priest in the Diocese I have always felt very passionate about playing a role in both keeping traditions within the Church as well as enabling the Church to move forward.

The Church of England faces many challenges today, same sex marriage being one of them, made more prominent by the Church of Scotland now allowing same sex marriages. Same sex marriage is just one of many recurring challenges the Church will, and must, address. However, it is not just about agreeing or disagreeing on a specific challenge it is about discerning a way in which all traditions of the Church of England can minister according to their beliefs.

I believe that my role at General Synod is not just to vote and participate in debates that fulfil my own agenda, but to represent the diversity of the Diocese of Exeter and the wider Anglican communion. If elected I will make sure that I am available to meet with any clergy to discuss General Synod items and openly discuss how I propose to vote on them.

I am very excited at the prospect of being one of the four clergy representatives, from the Diocese of Exeter, at General Synod and I hope that you vote for me using the highest voting preference that you can. If you wish to discuss anything with me before deciding on your vote, please do not hesitate to be in touch.

Thank you,

