

Revd Matt Gorton

My name is Matt Gorton, and I am a second-year curate being priested on September 26th. I'm a Devon boy through and through, I grew up in Plympton just outside of Plymouth. Then moved away only to return to be a youth worker at St Judes Church in Plymouth for 11 years before moving to the South Hams to do my ordination training as part of the first ever St Mellitus Southwest cohort. Working in the Yealm and Erme Mission community alongside the late Preb Anne Legge during which time the deanery was going through pastoral reordering that saw the Mission Community move from three parishes to six, before helping guide this newly formed MC to finding its new Team Rector and helping sustain the parishes during Anne's battle with cancer. During my time as an ordinand, I served on the Diocesan Synod in a lay capacity. I was part of the team that was driving Joy 2020 in the Plymouth Archdeaconry and served on the diocesan team for 'Setting Gods People Free' both of which fell victim to COVID despite our best efforts. I am currently serving my title post in the Kingsbridge Estuary Churches Mission Community alongside Preb Jackie Taylor who is also the Dean of women for the diocese. I am also on the standing committee for the Woodleigh Deanery Synod.

I am married to Beth who is a primary school teacher and SEND lead. We have two children, Sophia who is 11 and just started secondary school and Josh who is 9. We also have Heidi our cockapoo who is 7 but still a great running partner, when she's not chasing birds.

I'm standing for Synod as I will be working in the Anglican Church for at least another 35 years, and I want to help discern where God wants to take his church at such a crucial and pivotal point in history. The pandemic has changed everything, and it really has been a case of survival, but as we move out of this pandemic it's time to turn that survival into revival! A reset button has been pressed, we have the opportunity to reimagine and shape what the future of the church is whether that's traditional, modern, a fresh expression, BCP, lay led, child led, school based, in a building, outside the building, in the pub, on the street, online, in person. The fact is the possibilities are endless and I say this as someone who has worked in cities, towns, villages with Anglo catholic, low church, evangelical, charismatic, traditional, middle of the road and those who aren't sure what they are. There is beauty in every part of every parish in Devon. We need to stop focusing on the negatives or the barriers and start looking at what we do have and building from that point.

I'm under no illusion that these next years are going to bring challenges and difficult conversations but these things must be addressed. Whether that be to do with parishes, deployment of clergy, finances, issues raised by Living in Love and Faith, all of these will come to the fore, and there will be many things where we will need to learn to disagree well. Hold each other's viewpoints in tension and still move forward. As this is part of the true beauty of the Church of England. I can honestly say I go into this process with no agenda, I have felt Gods prompting and am responding to that call. Actually, I do have an agenda and that is to see God's church built here in Devon. I love Devon and I love God and I want to see what the two can do as we move into this new season of church life.

I may be relatively young and new to ordained ministry but my experience within the church at a leadership level is vast. I have been blessed to work alongside many great leaders and clergy both men and women who have shared their knowledge and wisdom with me, as well as having journeyed with several through the ups and downs of ministry, the laughter, and the tears.

So let me take part in these discussions on your behalf, having listened to your needs, worries, concerns, ideas, dreams, and passions and taking that to the place where people don't see Devon as just a pretty place to go on holiday but a place where God's church is in revival mode rather than survival mode!