

## General Synod Election Address 2021

The Rev'd John Thackray  
Parish Priest St Mary-at-the-Elms Ipswich  
Interim Priest-in-charge St Mary at Stoke, Ipswich



**Proposer:** The Rev'd Canon Nick Atkins  
Area Dean of Ipswich

**Secunder:** The Rev'd Kay Palmer  
Curate of St Mary at Stoke, Ipswich

Dear Colleague,

To represent our diocese on General Synod would be a prayerful privilege and a creative challenge. A member of our Diocesan Synod since I came to the diocese six years ago, I am the parish priest of a small parish in the centre of Ipswich. However, as a school chaplain for 27 years in four very different schools, many of my locum duties were in rural parishes; for over a decade I was scout leader of the villages on the Downs south-east of Canterbury. My perspective of our church is broad; my involvement in my Deanery – not least in *Inspiring Ipswich* – and in our Diocese is real.

The Church of England is called to proclaim joyfully to every generation and to all people the Christian faith, the hope of resurrection and the assurance of God's love. The ministry of the General Synod enables, encourages and exemplifies this proclamation. I ask you to consider, prayerfully of course, including me among your leading preferences on the ballot paper.

I hope that the new General Synod, led by the Holy Spirit, will seek:

- ✚ to continue to place mission and evangelism at the heart of its actions;
- ✚ to be loyal to our inheritance of Christian truth in the church's historic formularies;
- ✚ to maintain its concern for social and environmental justice.

As a member of the Synod I would offer:

- ✚ experience of ministry with young people;
- ✚ experience of ministry with those of other faiths and of none;
- ✚ experience of ecumenical initiatives.

### Mission and evangelism

- The parochial system is an integral part of the Church of England. It is a foundation stone of our mission; our duty and our joy is to support and develop it, together with the various initiatives that complement it.
- The opportunities provided by being the established Church should not be spurned.
- The emergence in recent years of different models of school chaplaincy in all church, and non-church, schools is heartening and is to be encouraged.
- The appropriate use of social media in increasing awareness of the church's work for social and environmental justice is to be supported.

## Ecumenism

- As Christians we are called by Jesus to be one – it is important to continue to reflect theologically and pragmatically on this vocation.
- Mutual respect and local co-operation between denominations is necessary for the kingdom to be the more fully lived and proclaimed.

## Post-pandemic

- The worship offered to God can be both sacramental and ‘virtual’ – Synod will be learning how these complement each other.
- The financial challenges that the church faces have been exacerbated in the last eighteen months – Synod will need to consider carefully how to maintain the confidence and trust of the Church.

## Anglican Communion

- In a post-colonial world, the Church of England should be humble in its willingness to learn from the experience of our fellow Provinces whilst continuing especially to support those which experience persecution, and inequitable trade and economic development.

## Racism

- In the spirit of *From Lament to Action* we must support proposals to eliminate racism at all levels of the Church. We must provide a clear example to others.

## Safeguarding

- All in our Church must be unequivocal in practising best practice, acknowledging where necessary uncomfortable truths.

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## Personal Information

- Parish priest since 2015; Assistant Area Dean of Ipswich; Bishop’s Ecumenical Adviser.
- School Chaplain of: Bancroft’s School; King’s School, Canterbury; The Archbishop’s School, Canterbury; King’s School, Rochester.
- Minor Canon of Canterbury 1993 – 2019; Priest Vicar of Rochester 2002 – 2015.
- Chair of the School Chaplains’ Association for five years; vice-chair of School Chaplains’ and Leaders’ Association for five years. Co-founder (2011) the National School Chaplaincy Conference.
- Assistant Curate St John’s Loughton 1984 – 87.
- BSc. in Mathematics from Southampton; formed for the priesthood at Mirfield.
- Associate of the Chartered Institute of Bankers (Five years with Lloyds Bank)
- As a layman: church organist of Willingale and (family church) The Ascension Chelmsford together.

## Contact Information

E-mail: [thereverendfather@hotmail.com](mailto:thereverendfather@hotmail.com)

Phone: 07780 613754

68, Black Horse Lane, Ipswich IP1 2EF

Thank you for your time in reading this address. Please get in touch with me if you’d like to discuss anything. Please pray for all candidates. I would be grateful for your support and prayers – and also for a significant preference vote! If elected, I will endeavour to serve you and our diocese prayerfully.