

My name is Alistair Bassett. I am 28, live in Gateshead with my wife Charlotte and our two children, and worship at Alive St George's Church in Gateshead Deanery. I am seeking your support to represent the laity of the Diocese of Durham on General Synod.

About Me

I grew up in Northamptonshire before moving to Canterbury to study Politics. It was there that I first became part of the Church of England, worshipping at St Mary Bredin, where I became heavily involved in children's and mercy ministries and was elected to Deanery Synod and PCC.



Following university and a period of discernment, I moved to Christ Church Chorleywood to train in children's ministry. Much of my time there coincided with the pandemic, which gave me a new appreciation for the importance of the local church and parish. When people could not come to church, the Church went to them — supporting families, vulnerable people and elderly parishioners. It reinforced for me that the Church exists not only to gather for worship, but to serve the communities around us.

In 2021 I moved to Gateshead and joined Alive Church, where I have worshipped ever since. My ministry has included children's work on a Sunday, midweek after school clubs, holiday clubs, Alpha, schools' ministry, community outreach and the many other things that make up church life and ministry; my wife also serves on the PCC.

Since 2023 I have worked for The Boys' Brigade as part of its Ministry and Programme Team, supporting churches to reach new families and developing resources to help disciple children and young people.

These experiences have given me a broad appreciation of the Church of England. I have worshipped and served in different church traditions and settings and have encountered God just as powerfully in an early-morning Book of Common Prayer Communion as in a gathering of thousands. I value the breadth of our Church and want to see its different parts flourishing together.

Why I am standing for General Synod

A Church that is growing younger

At 28, I would bring to General Synod the perspective of a generation which is often spoken about but is less frequently represented in the rooms where decisions are made. However, for me, this is about much more than simply making Synod itself younger. I want to see the whole Church growing younger.

Children, young people and families have been at the heart of much of my ministry. Our Diocese has rightly made engagement with children, youth and young adults a priority, while nationally the Church has ambitions to double the number of children and young active disciples by 2030 and raise up 30,000 new children, youth and family ministers.

I want to see those ambitions become more than national targets. This cannot simply be about a handful of larger churches growing their ministries. Every church should be encouraged, equipped and resourced to play its part: building relationships with its local schools and communities, welcoming children and families, discipling young people and releasing people of every generation to use the gifts God has given them.

A Church confident in its hope

Too often, national headlines about the Church of England and General Synod are dominated by decline, disagreement, scandal and division. We must face serious challenges honestly, but we should not allow them to define us. The Church is ultimately in the business of hope.

Across our Diocese, and across the Church of England, there are countless stories which rarely make the headlines: people encountering Jesus, churches serving their communities, children discovering faith, families finding a place to belong, Christians caring for those in need and ordinary congregations faithfully worshipping and witnessing week after week.

Our hope is not ultimately found in a new strategy, structure or initiative. Our hope is found in Jesus. I want General Synod to be a place which can deal honestly and graciously with disagreement and difficulty, while never losing sight of why the Church exists: to worship God, make Jesus known and share his hope with the communities we are called to serve.

Taking the work of Synod seriously

As a politics graduate, the governance and business of General Synod is not something I would simply endure in order to speak on the issues I care about - it is an important part of the role that genuinely interests me.

Synod's work requires members who will read papers carefully, scrutinise legislation and motions, listen to different perspectives, contribute constructively to debate and make prayerful decisions.

The next Synod will inherit substantial unfinished work. There remains vital work to do on safeguarding, including independent scrutiny and redress for victims and survivors, alongside continuing questions about clergy wellbeing, pay, housing, pensions and the reform of clergy discipline.

Behind all of these debates is an increasingly important question: how do the structures and resources of the Church enable rather than hinder its mission? The summary of the outgoing Synod identifies a significant shift towards recognising that simply carrying on with "business as usual" is not enough and that the Church's structures need to serve its mission. I would want to bring both a willingness to consider change and a strong appreciation of the local parish church, asking whether our national decisions help churches to be faithful, safe, sustainable and effective in making Jesus known.

Representing you

If elected, I would not see myself simply as a representative of my own church tradition, generation or particular areas of interest. I would seek to represent the laity of the whole Diocese of Durham, listening to views from across our different churches and traditions.

Thank you for taking the time to read my election statement and I hope you would consider giving me your first preference, or one of your high preference votes. I am contactable and accessible, so should you wish to chat further or if you have any questions, you can contact me below:

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