

General Synod Address:

Revd Dr Alexander Jones

I am standing for General Synod in 2026 and share this as an introduction to who I am and why I offer myself for Synod.

Background

I grew up in the North East of Scotland, studied at St Andrews University and then, sensing God was calling me to 'something', found myself serving as Operations Director for a church in the South West of England. I thought I could do the role for a couple of years and then continue with life as I planned. However, the sense of God calling me to more did not go away and I ended up moving to the North East to train for ordination at Cranmer Hall. I have served all of my ordained ministry in Durham Diocese, initially as a Curate at Alive Church Gateshead where I focussed on developing work with refugees and helping people explore faith.



For the last two years I have served as Growing Mission Strategic Lead for Durham Diocese and CEO of Communities Together Durham. Alongside these roles I have ongoing self-supporting ministry in Alive Church and Gateshead Deanery. My wife Sarah is Associate Vicar at Alive Church and we have two year old twin boys who keep us on our toes!

As Growing Mission Strategic Lead I work with churches in moments of change, particularly through vacancy and with our Interim Change Ministers. This insight helps me to wrestle with the reality of ministry across the diocese, strengths and weaknesses, while also spending a significant amount of my time looking for what God is doing in the quiet, trying to find where he is at work and how to go with this.

As CEO of Communities Together Durham (CTD) I lead a team and charity which supports churches to love and serve their community. I lead on the challenging poverty priority for Durham Diocese and long to see churches meeting the deep needs of their community. At CTD we are focussed on finding ways to come alongside and support the local church in being the people God has called them to be.

My experience of church and community spans the whole spectrum. My background was in the countryside of small town Scotland. I am comfortable in small and large, rural and urban, contemporary and traditional. For the Church of England to flourish in our generation every one of these needs to be fruitful, together.

So, why general synod?

In each and every generation we are called to proclaim afresh the good news of Jesus. **Seeing people come to know Jesus for themselves** is at the centre of my own faith, ministry and understanding of church. General Synod has the ability through resourcing, culture and emphasis in the church to ensure that sharing faith is the key priority for the Church of England in our time.

The Church of England must be centred on **flourishing local churches**. Places in local communities across the diocese where Jesus is worshipped, individuals grow in faith and communities are impacted. As a representative on General Synod I would emphasise the role of the local church. The national church, dioceses and deaneries are important structures, but they are ultimately structures that should serve the local church.

We are called by Jesus not only to the church, but to see whole communities flourish. This is at the heart of my own sense of calling. In particular, I would highlight the priority of **resourcing ministry in the most deprived communities**. Just over 50% of parishes in Durham diocese are in the 20% most deprived nationally. As part of General Synod I would work to ensure the equitable distribution of financial resources and the prioritisation of ministry in our most deprived communities.

Finally, I would work to see the **structures of the church align with the mission**. Structures of the church often feel like they work against the natural mission of the local church to love, serve and reach the community around them. Clergy long to serve the communities they have been called to. Governance and administration must work to make this possible, to free up clergy, PCCs and others for mission and ministry. Good governance is key to the Church of England, locally and nationally. In particular, work around safeguarding is likely to again be key to the next Synod. I will work to ensure the structures are clear, practical, safe and well-setup for the local church.

What I have shared here is not so much a vision for the Church of England, as my own sense of what God has called me to. To see churches alive, people coming to know Jesus for themselves, wider communities flourish, and to get stuck into the operational, structural and strategic work needed to get there. This sums up what I did before ordination, in Curacy and in my current roles. I offer this and myself to you for General Synod.

A joy of my roles is spending time listening to clergy, lay leaders and deaneries. As a representative on General Synod I would prioritise listening and understanding the perspectives of clergy from across the diocese.

If you would like to ask any questions, please feel free to get in touch with me:

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