



Rev'd Mark Miller

Vicar of Stockton Parish Church

Candidate for General Synod House of Clergy

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Nominated by:

The Ven Libby Wilkinson, Archdeacon of Durham

The Revd Paul Neville, Area Dean of Stockton

Five years ago, Durham clergy elected me to General Synod for the first time. I am asking for your support to serve for another term.

I remain first and foremost a parish priest. I have been at Stockton Parish Church since I was ordained in 2012 and have been the Vicar since 2016. We serve the 15th most deprived parish in England and are a wonderfully diverse church family, with more than 20 nationalities represented and people from very different backgrounds sharing life and faith together.

Before ordination I spent 16 years as a children's social worker. I am married to Beth, we have three grown-up children, and I enjoy cooking, playing guitar, woodwork and running four mornings a week (although 'enjoy' may still be overstating my relationship with running!)

I am most at home in an Evangelical Charismatic context, but I genuinely love the breadth of the Church of England and want churches across our different traditions to be confident in the gospel, flourishing in their communities and reaching people who do not yet know Jesus.

A General Synod seat is something to use

When you elected me, I did not think my job was simply to attend meetings and cast votes. You can see some examples of my contributions using the link or QR code over the page.

Over the last five years, I have regularly spoken in debates, asked questions and challenged proposals and senior leadership. I have particularly pressed issues affecting parish ministry: whether funding intended for low-income communities actually reaches their parishes, the balance between central posts and front-line ministry, clergy wellbeing and access to Net Zero funding.

Questions I raised about Net Zero funding for LInC parishes helped bring about changes to the small-grants scheme, and I have continued pressing for the same principle to apply to larger projects.

I am willing to ask difficult questions of senior leadership when necessary, and to keep asking when an issue matters.

Serving nationally also helps me serve Durham. I served on the Crown Nominations Commission which nominated Bishop Rick, and what I learn nationally informs my contribution to Diocesan Synod and Finance Group, while parish and diocesan realities shape the questions I take to General Synod.

It has genuinely been a privilege to serve: to listen and learn, build friendships across the Church and contribute to the life and mission of the Church of England nationally.

Keeping the main thing the main thing

Synod necessarily deals with legislation, safeguarding, finance and difficult questions. They matter, but Jesus calls us to make disciples.

I want the national Church to help local churches fulfil that Great Commission: sharing the good news of Jesus, growing disciples and serving the communities in which God has placed us.

That is also why clergy wellbeing matters. We cannot keep talking about mission while exhausting the people called to lead it. Clergy wellbeing must be proactive, asking whether our expectations, structures and resources enable clergy to flourish, rather than simply offering support once things go wrong.

Serving in Stockton also means I will continue banging the drum for parishes in low-income communities. Funding announcements are welcome, but I will keep asking the rather less glamorous question: *Where does the money actually go?* Those parishes are too easily overlooked when the Church allocates its people, money and resources. Our poorest communities should not be asked to travel the furthest with the least.

There are plenty of reasons to be concerned about the Church of England, but I remain profoundly hopeful about the Church of Jesus Christ. Synod needs seriousness, but it also needs joy and hope, and a persistent reminder of the mission for which we are there.

Working across deep differences

Living in Love and Faith occupied a great deal of the last Synod and revealed profound differences within the Church. I served on the Leicester LLF working groups, working closely with people across the range of views in the Church, building genuine friendships and working hard together to find ways forward despite holding very different views.

That experience has reinforced my conviction that what unites us in Christ is greater than what divides us. We can disagree honestly, listen seriously and treat one another with affection and respect without pretending our differences do not matter. Those differences are important, but they are not the whole story of our life together or the mission God has given us.

Why I hope you will elect me again

My priorities remain fairly simple:

Keep the Great Commission the main thing.

Support clergy so that they can do the main thing.

Make sure poorer parishes have what they need to do the main thing.

I will continue to contribute actively and work constructively across our differences. It would be a privilege to serve you and the Church of England in this way for another five years.

If you re-elect me, I will continue to regard myself as a representative of all the clergy of Durham Diocese, including those who disagree with me. You do not have to share all my views for me to listen to you, raise issues that matter to you or work alongside you.

I would be very grateful for your **first-preference vote**. If another candidate is your first choice, I hope you would consider giving me a high preference so that I can continue this work on behalf of Durham clergy.

Mark



See some of my contributions to General Synod: <https://bit.ly/4zVIZME> or scan the QR code.