

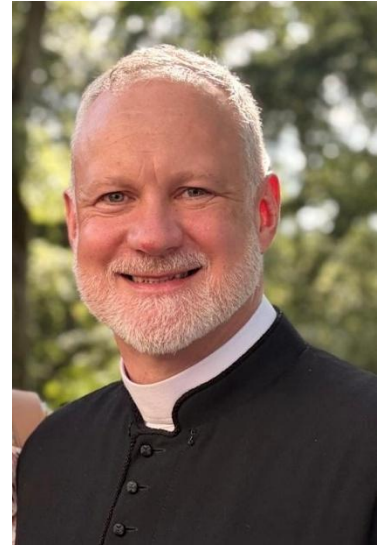
Revd Andrew Birks

Election Address — General Synod

For a Church that welcomes, listens, and enables all to flourish

I am standing for General Synod because I believe deeply in a Church that is inclusive, pastorally grounded, and committed to the wellbeing of all who serve within it. My ministry across three dioceses - Chichester, Ely, and now Peterborough - has shown me how much our clergy, lay leaders, chaplains, and congregations give of themselves, and how essential it is that the Church creates the conditions in which they can flourish.

My vocation has been shaped by a varied journey. Before ordination, I served for nearly two decades as a police officer in Cambridgeshire, the City of London, and the Metropolitan Police, resigning in 2019 to pursue full-time ministry. That experience taught me resilience, integrity, and compassionate leadership — qualities that continue to shape my ministry today.



My ordained ministry has taken me from Chichester, where I served as a Licensed Lay Minister, Deacon, Priest, and Incumbent, to Ely, where I served a rural benefice and as Rural Dean of Shingay Deanery.

Now, as Senior Chaplain to the Bishop of Peterborough, I see daily the breadth of diocesan life — rural parishes, market towns, urban communities, and chaplaincies. My Master's in Canon Law, and current PhD Law study, also equip me to contribute thoughtfully to Synod's legislative work. These experiences shape my conviction that Synod must champion a Church where every person and every context is valued.

I have been supported in my application with nominations from: Revd George Brett, from St Andrew's Church, Kettering; and Revd Dean Akrill from Ketton and Tinwell. In standing for General Synod, I offer a pastoral and practical voice rooted in local church life and attentive to those who serve. My commitments are simple: **Belonging**, so all are valued; **Sustaining**, so ministers are supported; **Rootedness**, so mission grows from local communities; and **Hope**, so we face the future with faith and confidence.

A Church where everyone belongs

Inclusivity is central to the gospel we proclaim. I want to help build a Synod that strengthens a Church where:

- people of all backgrounds, abilities, identities, and ages feel fully welcomed
- our worship, governance, and mission reflect the diversity of our communities
- safeguarding, accessibility, and pastoral care are treated as core commitments
- those who feel unheard or marginalised find a genuine place of belonging

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A Church that supports and sustains its ministers

Clergy wellbeing is vital to the health of the Church. Drawing on my work as Bishop's Chaplain and in parish and deanery leadership, I will work for:

- policies that support clergy resilience and prevent burnout
- realistic workloads and transparent processes
- better resourcing for rural ministry, where pressures are often acute
- encouragement and recognition for chaplains whose ministry is often unseen but transformative

A Church rooted in the life of its communities

Our diocese is wonderfully varied: from the rural villages of Rutland and East Northamptonshire, to the expanding communities of Peterborough, to the historic market towns that shape our civic identity. I want Synod to strengthen this local rootedness by:

- enabling parishes to respond creatively to local needs
- supporting civic partnerships that enhance the common good
- ensuring chaplaincies remain a vital part of our public witness
- advocating for mission that is relational, context-aware, and grounded in hope

A Church that listens well and leads with grace

Healthy governance requires humility, honesty, and a commitment to listening. If elected, I will work for:

- respectful debate that honours our Anglican breadth
- decision-making that is transparent, prayerful, and accountable
- a Synod culture where disagreement is handled with grace and unity is sought without uniformity



A Church shaped by hope

We face real challenges — but also extraordinary opportunities. I believe God is calling us to be a Church marked by hope: hope for our clergy, hope for our congregations, hope for those on the margins, and hope for a future where the Church of England is known for its generosity, integrity, and welcome.

If elected, I will bring compassion, honesty, and practical support to General Synod, advocating for clergy wellbeing, ministry in every context, and the support ministers need to flourish in Christ's service. I am committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and roles within the church, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, mental health or sexuality.

I hope that you will feel able to support me with your first preference vote!

If you would like to discuss my nomination or this election address please do get in touch, my contact details are shown below.

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