



Steve Vince

Candidate for election to the House of Laity in General Synod

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Proposed by: Chris Gill
(Chair, Vacancy-in-See Committee)

Seconded by: Stephen Robinson
(Bishop's Council, Vacancy-in-See Committee)

It has been said that the reason for Synods and the like in the Church is that "Even in the household of God, someone has to do the washing-up". Accordingly I am offering myself for election as a "washer-upper" to the 2026-31 session of General Synod.

About me

- I came originally from the south of England. After university at Durham (where I met my wife), I arrived in Wolverhampton in January 1979 (in the course of a post-university gap year) and stayed.
- Married to Alison for 46 years and we have an adult son and daughter, both of whom have long fled the nest, and an eleven-year-old granddaughter.
- After my gap year I worked in Human Resources (briefly), Information Technology (mainly) and Finance until my retirement. I still work as a volunteer at the Talyllyn Railway in Wales (see picture).
- I have also been able to enjoy plenty of travelling since I retired (by rail when I can, by air if I must!), including three ministering trips to Indonesia and to the Anglican Church there with groups from Bushbury Parish.

My faith journey

- I found my way into the life and worship of the Church of England as a choirboy (the parish church was five minutes' walk from where we lived, and my godfather was the organist), and was later brought to a living faith in Jesus by my school chaplain.
- At the age of 18, when about to go to Durham University, I was brought face to face with my personal inadequacy (although outwardly I was successful and highly privileged), and experienced what I now regard as a second conversion.
- I was greatly blessed by Christian activities at Durham, and by the church I attended during my university vacations, which helped enormously to lay the foundations for adult discipleship of Jesus.
- I have also been greatly blessed, and nurtured, by every strand in the Church of England, and combine a devotion to Scripture with a love for the liturgy and the sacraments.
- I have belonged to St Mary's Church, Bushbury, for over 30 years: currently on the PCC (and also District Church Council, Bushbury being a Team Ministry) and on St Mary's Mission and Ministry Team; I am also a musician and an occasional preacher.
- Also on Wulfrun Deanery Synod (Lay Chair designate), Diocesan Synod, Bishop's Council, Vacancy-in-See Committee, and a Trustee of St Chad's Retreat Centres which owns and runs Shallowford House (of which I have been a prayer supporter for nearly 40 years).

"Please feel free to contact me if you want to ask anything"

The washing-up

“As the Father sent me, I am sending you” (John 20.21)

The vocation of the Christian Church in any nation is to call that nation into discipleship of Jesus, in obedience to his words in the so-called “Great Commission”: “So you must go and make all the nations into disciples” (Matthew 28.19 NTE). The Church of England is uniquely placed to fulfil that vocation in England, and in seeking election to the General Synod I desire above all else to enable that to happen and to see God’s kingdom come afresh in our land.

“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8.32)

The last 60-70 years have seen the emergence in this land of false gods and of ideologies that are virulently opposed to Christian truth, to the point where their adherents have tried and are trying to make criticising or opposing them illegal; and some of these are having an unhealthy influence on, and in, the Church of England. I will support anything that helps us, at every level in the Church, to recover confidence in the truth of what we proclaim, and to proclaim it boldly and clearly and to live it out too, so that the people of our land can know and see that our God is good.

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13.35)

The party spirit in the Church is worse now, I believe, than it has ever been in my lifetime, and a Church at war with itself will never be able to fulfil its vocation. I pledge, if elected, to do all within my power to deepen understanding between those who disagree, and to seek to heal the wounds we are inflicting on ourselves.

Enabling the Church

Unless what we do in Synod has an effect for the better on the ground, we are wasting our time. Some of the things I would wish to try to do for the Church in our land are:

- Ensure our parish clergy are properly trained, properly supported, and preach neither “truth without love” nor “love without truth”.
- Ensure that there is a national strategy to prevent jobs from becoming so impossible (especially rural multi-parish posts and posts in hard places) that no priest in her/his right mind would apply for them.
- Find a way to assist much more effectively in the upkeep of our church buildings – is there anything that cripples a local church’s ministry more than constantly having to try to raise money to keep the building going? (Especially if the heating system breaks down!)

Prayer

I am personally conscious of a calling to pray for our church and for our land. I rejoice that in recent years there seems to have been more and more prayer going on (“Thy Kingdom Come” is a wonderful initiative), but across the Church of England as a whole there could be so much more, and if elected I would want to encourage the Synod to pray more and to encourage more prayer.

“Worry is a conversation we have with ourselves about things we cannot change; prayer is a conversation we have with God about things he can change.” (*origin unknown*)

Summary

As one who loves the Church of England, cares about every strand in it, and longs to see it enabled as an instrument of the kingdom of God in our land, I ask for your support. Please consider giving me your first place preference.

“Please feel free to contact me if you want to ask anything”