

## **Revd Mike Coe**

**Vicar: All Saints, Ilkley (Bradford Episcopal Area)  
Area Dean: South Craven and Wharfedale Deanery**



### **About me**

I'm from Romford, Essex but haven't lived there since I went to university in 1981. After university and before ordination I worked in marketing/sales, was a regional children's and youth worker for the Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS) and led church based evangelistic missions in the UK. Ordained in 2000, I served my curacy in Peterborough Diocese, and was a vicar in Hastings (Chichester Diocese) for 15 years where I was also the Area Dean. I've been the vicar of All Saints Ilkley since 2018 and the Area Dean of South Craven and Wharfedale Deanery since 2020.

I'm married to Lisa with four adult children, five grandchildren and one soft-coated Wheaten Terrier! I'm a very keen West Ham Utd supporter, enjoy long distance walking (the latest being Wainwright's Coast-to-Coast earlier this year), going to the cinema (mainstream and off-beat) and reading WW2 history.

### **Why am I standing for General Synod?**

I'm standing for General Synod because, in my nearly 25 years since ordination, I have experience of mission and ministry in Dioceses in the North, the Midlands and the South in three very different social and demographic contexts. As a result, I have significant interest in, concern for and experience of several issues that are 'present-tense' in the Church of England. I've outlined some of those areas below to which, if I am elected, I would hope to make a helpful and significant contribution to represent, support and be a voice for clergy working at the 'coal-face'.

#### **1. Clergy well-being and welfare**

I had to take some time out from ministry a few years ago due to workplace stress and burnout. Because of that difficult time I have personal experience of the negative impact of the pressures and difficulties that clergy on the 'front-line' of parish ministry face. I welcome the General Synod initiative for clergy to have 36 hours off per working week but I believe there is more that could and should be done to enable all clergy to be better pastorally and practically supported.

#### **2. Evangelism and mission**

Before ordination, for eight years I was an itinerant evangelist leading church-based outreach initiatives. Through that I became convinced of the critical need for local churches to prioritise the active proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ to all ages, with a specific focus on outreach to families with school aged children. Not that other ages are less important, but because, in my experience, churches that are thriving and growing have an effective ministry to that group. If you reach them, often through a

proactive ministry in and through church schools, you are also reaching parents, grandparents and the wider community. I want to see Synod prioritising the effective resourcing of training, encouraging and equipping clergy so they can train, encourage and equip others in this crucial area.

### **3. Human sexuality**

I hold to orthodox and traditional Biblical teaching in this area and want the church to maintain and uphold its existing doctrine of marriage. However, I recognise the deeply held views of those who disagree with me and long to see a change in the church's teaching and practice. I believe that to move forward with as much unity as possible, and before substantive decisions are made, we need to listen to voices from all sides of the debate with respect and clear understanding. Ultimately I believe there is more that unites us than divides us.

### **4. Retired clergy**

Having recently returned from a three month sabbatical where my study part was 'Finishing Well in Stipendiary Ministry', my appreciation of the importance of retired clergy to the present and future mission and ministry of the church has been reaffirmed. I want to see Synod continuing to recognise the invaluable place of retired clergy and to enable the best use of their gifts, abilities and experiences whilst making proper provision for their personal and pastoral needs in retirement.

### **5. The worldwide church**

I have a particular concern for Christians in the persecuted church across the world. I want the Church of England to be at the forefront of advocating for their rights and prayerfully and practically supporting their needs. In the midst of the inevitable focus on our own concerns and issues we must not lose sight of the reality of what it means to be a Christian in places where persecution is a present day experience.

### **6. Re-establishing confidence and trust in General Synod**

In recent conversations with clergy the one thing that everyone seems to agree about, regardless of their churchmanship, is a dismay at the manner and tone of how General Synod has conducted its business recently, and the growing lack of confidence and trust in the leadership of the Church. There is a pressing need to change that narrative and I would hope to play a part in that if I were elected.

Thank you for taking the time to read my statement. If you would like to ask any questions before deciding whether to vote for me, my email address is [mike.coe@allsaintsilkley.org](mailto:mike.coe@allsaintsilkley.org)