

# GENERAL SYNOD CASUAL VACANCY ELECTIONS

## ELECTION ADDRESS



### **Candidate:**

The Rev'd Canon David Gerrard  
Vicar of St Catherine's Church,  
East Wakefield and Area Dean of  
Wakefield

### **Proposer:**

The Rev'd Canon Philip Hobday  
Subdean of Wakefield Cathedral

### **Secunder:**

The Rev'd Canon Paul Cartwright  
Priest-in-Charge of St Luke's  
Grimethorpe with St Paul's  
Brierley, St James the Great Ryhill,  
All Saint South Kirkby and Area  
Dean of Pontefract

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### **Personal Background**

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I am married to Carole, a  
Primary School Teacher, and  
we have two daughters, Sarah  
and Anabel. In my spare time I  
enjoy music, long walks,  
reading and all things science  
fiction!

### *Career and Ministry*

After graduating with a joint degree in History, Professional Development and Primary Education I spent 5 years working as a Primary School teacher. After being called to ordination I trained at Trinity College in Bristol and then served my curacy in the Parish of St Anne's, Shevington in the Diocese of Blackburn from 2012. In 2014 I completed my MPhil in the area of Biblical Studies.

In 2016 I became the Priest-in-Charge of the United Benefice of St Catherine's, Belle Vue and St Andrew's and St Mary's, Wakefield; inner city, multicultural parishes with high levels of deprivation. In 2019 I became the Area Dean of Wakefield and in 2023 I took on the role of Project Lead of the SDF funded 'Every Good Work' Project.

I am also Church Growth Companion, a member of Leeds' Diocesan Synod, a founding member of Vision Wakefield and the co-founder of the Wakefield Interfaith Forum. I have also been a tutor at Leeds' School of Ministry.

### *Areas of Interest*

**Young people:** Before ordination I was a Primary School teacher and since ordination I have continued to do a lot of work in the field. I also lead the 'Every Good Work' Project, which works with young people cross the city of Wakefield, engaging them in social action and discipleship. I am convinced that our churches need young people. We need to be hearing their voices and perspectives, as well as helping them to grow in their discipleship.

**Creating a Safe Church:** I believe the church has to be a safe place for children, vulnerable people and also clergy. This means reviewing and reforming our Safeguarding practices and the Clergy Discipline Measure. Many people have been hurt and it is important to do all we can to prevent this in the future.

**Sexuality:** In regard to the ongoing discussions on human sexuality and relationships; I support the church's traditional position on marriage and relationships. However, I am also convinced that we need to find ways to help all people feel welcome and loved by the church. I believe it is vital that the Church of England finds a way forward that allows us to remain united.

**Poverty:** The socio-economic classification, for the parish in which I serve, places it in the bottom 5% of the country. We run two community centres, seeking to help in the areas of food poverty, social isolation, mental health, education and more. We run a fresh expression of church reaching out to people struggling with homelessness, addiction issues, mental health struggles and other areas of need. I am passionate about calling the Church of England to be in the poorest areas. Instead we are closing churches and withdrawing from the most deprived areas of our country. The same could be said for the disparities in wealth across dioceses. If we are to be the body of Christ, we must not allow this to unthinkingly happen.

**Mission and Ministry:** In a turbulent and divided world the call to proclaim the Gospel is more important than ever. The decisions made at General Synod, including how resources are allocated across the Church of England, are vital if we are to be effective in sharing the Gospel. The call to pray, the call to evangelism and the call to be the body of Christ in each community should remain the core of all we do.

**Trust:** In my experience there has been a breakdown of trust not only in society as a whole, but within the church itself. In a church that is called to be known for its love for each other, this is heartbreaking. In a distrustful world it is important that we demonstrate a different way of being and if elected I will speak for transparency and openness within the church.

**Witness:** The Church of England has a long standing role in speaking into the public square. There are numerous areas in our culture into which the church should be speaking with a clear voice. For example, the new assisted suicide bill currently passing through parliament, to which the church has a critical role in proclaiming the sanctity of human life. The General Synod has a role to play in speaking clearly into these nation debates.

## *Conclusion*

Thank you for taking the time to read this Election Address. I believe that we are in a crucial moment for the church and would be honoured to be your representative at General Synod. Please do contact me if you would like a further conversation and I would be grateful if you could give me your vote.

## **Contact Details**

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