

July 2026 marked the 22nd year of my ordination at Blackburn Cathedral. Since then I have served God in urban and suburban contexts and presently serve as Incumbent at St Thomas' in Central Blackpool. Coming from a non-Christian family in my 20's, a skinhead and into punk rock, I had a dramatic life changing encounter with the Holy Spirit. Because of this I passionately want as many people as possible to have their own personal encounter with Him too. This is my driving conviction whether on synod or in regular parish ministry. Possessing a great love for the Church of England, belief and passion that the Good News of Jesus Christ is the hope for our nation and ultimately the whole world. During my ministry I have been privileged to officiate and worship in churches across the whole spectrum of Anglican churchmanship and I have always been able to work well across deaneries, diocesan synods with colleagues and Christians of all traditions.

Due to the retirement of Mark Ireland, which left a vacancy for a Blackburn clergy representative, I was privileged to serve on General Synod for one year to complete the term of office. This past year has provided me with invaluable experience of how synod works and the opportunity of witnessing how decisions affect the local parish context where we live and worship. I am standing again to have the opportunity of serving Blackburn Diocese and to be a voice for Christians in Lancashire. I am also standing for nomination again for General Synod because I believe it is our Anglican vocation to be faithful witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which Paul describes as the "power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (*Romans 1.16*). I am convinced that this is the message of the Bible and the one the Apostles and Church Fathers passed down to us as expressed in our Creeds and shaped our Canons. I am deeply concerned that in our sincere endeavours to be relevant to our culture we are in danger of losing the very Gospel which gives the message its power in the first place. I believe we should be a church which reflects the God who calls us to follow Him rather than a church that calls God to follow the ethics of the secular world which constantly changes. What's at stake ultimately is the health of our souls. It is this passion that informs my Theology and conviction on marriage, ethics and mission which I describe as 'Scripturally Shaped, Reformed Catholic'. These will be the values I will stand for at General Synod should I be privileged to be nominated. I do this with a good heart and the ability to disagree well whilst maintaining belief in traditional orthodoxy.

Thank you for taking the time to read my election address.

With Blessings

Dave (David) O'Brien

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