

Revd Matthew Firth



Proposed by: Revd Nigel Beer

Seconded by: Revd Graham Potter

Chaplain, University of Cumbria

Minister, The Way Church

Address:

Chaplain's Lodge

6 Lismore Place

Carlisle, CA1 1LX

Tel: 07932482929

e-mail: matthew.firth@cumbria.ac.uk

Dear friend,

The previous General Synod focussed much of its energy on the issue of who can be a bishop. This meant that vision was turned inward, a divisive polarity was entrenched, and eyes were taken off the search for creative solutions which will enable the Church to re-engage the nation with the good news of Jesus Christ. Many are now realising that the next General Synod needs to be revitalised by an influx of members who are not weary of previous battles but rather who are full of energy, new ideas and fresh optimism which will enable the Synod to prioritise outward-focused mission in creative and strategic ways.

That's why I'm standing for election, and that's why I'd encourage you to give me your vote.

We find ourselves living, working and ministering in a context where many are ready to write the obituary of the Church. But we need to say, 'Not on our watch!', because there are so many opportunities and green shoots of life springing up. In my role as a university chaplain, I'm seeing that millennials who are disconnected from church are nevertheless becoming increasingly open to the God of love who can form their lives for service in the world. As a pioneer minister leading a new, small and growing church among 18-30s, I'm seeing that new forms of church life can enable young adults to re-connect with church and come to faith in Jesus. And as a member of a national network of pioneer practitioners, I'm seeing that national strategy and coordination in this area can enable real impact at the local level.

These are the insights that I'd like to take into General Synod. As the simplification aspect of the Reform & Renewal programme takes shape, voices are needed which will put mission at the top of the agenda, which will help to form legislation that will enable Fresh Expressions to become a more robust part of the national scene, and which will campaign for a framework of resourcing and permission-giving which will allow many new forms of church to spread their wings and take off.

As the Diocese of Carlisle seeks to invest one third of its resources into pioneer ministry within its 'God For All' strategy, it seems to me that a good form of representation for the diocese in the House of Clergy would be to have two members who represent inherited models of church and one member who represents new and pioneering forms of church. Please do consider giving me your vote if you would like to see pioneer ministry represented for the diocese in this way in Synod.

Very many thanks,

Matthew.