

# Revd David Craven

*Rector of Holme Eden and Wetheral with Warwick*

**Proposed by Revd Canon Gary Cregeen**

*Team Rector of South Barrow*

*Rural Dean of Barrow*

**Seconded by Revd Canon Geoffrey Ravalde**

*Vicar of Wigton and Priest in Charge of Thursby*



Dear Colleague,

My name is David Craven. I am 35 years of age, married to Ruth (many of you will have spoken to her during her time as PA to the Bishop of Carlisle) and we have a 3-year-old son called Noah with another child on the way! I have served my entire ministry here in the Carlisle Diocese, and indeed the same benefice. Having completed my title post in the parishes of Holme Eden and Wetheral with Warwick I was inducted as Rector some 6 years ago now. I love the people, I love the place and I love the privilege of serving God here in Cumbria.

That's a little about me as a person, but why stand for General Synod? Well, 2015 is a year for elections it would seem. The General Election saw significant changes to this country's political landscape and I sense that the same might be the case for our Church. Too often the Church has been accused of navel gazing. I believe that there is an opportunity for the General Synod to change that perception. The recent working group reports for the Church's 'Programme for Reform and Renewal' have presented us with a bold and radical call to change and action. This excites me, and I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to its ongoing development and implementation.

Here in this diocese we're actively looking to the future, boldly exploring what the Church should look like for the next generation. We're positively engaging in a process that puts the good news of Jesus Christ and the positive difference he can make at the heart of our life, a message that speaks of change and transformation.

I am passionately committed to maintaining a breadth within the Church of England. It is important that differences are respected and the mutual flourishing of all is encouraged and enabled. This after all is part of being family, of being a community and for the Christian it is the gospel which should shape that community. Now is the opportunity for Synod to demonstrate a recovery of love as we recall our mutual belonging and common identity in Christ.

It's not a surprise to find I'm often the youngest person in the room when I attend gatherings of clergy, and yet that youthfulness does not mean "inexperienced". Far from it; in fact, with 9 years of ministry under my belt here in the Carlisle Diocese I'm in an unusual position; I bring a degree of experience of parish life in a rural context but also youth, energy and enthusiasm. Thoughts of collecting my pension are a long way off!

Much of what the General Synod will be discussing during the next five years will be on matters that will personally affect my ministry, and that of the next generation. I believe my age coupled with my experience means I have much to offer the wider Church. Why should General Synod be the preserve of the 50s, 60s and 70s? There needs to be a balance. General Synod will doubtless be faced with many "bread and butter" issues, as well as significant discussions on a whole range of topics. I realize that none of these issues are simple or easy and I will try and regard Synod as a "school in the Lord's service."

I do hope you'll consider putting a high preference vote, preferably your first preference, next to my name when you come to vote. If, having read this document, you have any questions then please don't hesitate to get in touch.

*David*

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## **EVANGELISM**

The Church exists to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. The General Synod should see itself as the servant and enabler of the Church's mission. I would support any initiative that sought to move the Synod away from inward-looking agendas and to putting evangelism at the forefront of all it does.

I am an advocate for the releasing of capital held by the Church Commissioners to pump prime new local initiatives geared towards growing the local church through mission and outreach.

## **HUMAN SEXUALITY**

This is a hugely complex and emotive area and in the heat of theological discussion it's all too easy to become polarized and to forget those individuals who identify as LGBT. I do think the Church needs to listen more carefully to the personal experiences of all to enable us to offer appropriate pastoral care and support.

That said, I would not be comfortable in supporting a change to the current Canon on Marriage. The Church is called to proclaim afresh to each generation the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds. I believe it's possible to articulate a faithful biblical position on marriage and matters of human sexuality in a way that is pastorally sensitive and caring to all, showing that Christ's message is one with different and better priorities and emphases than those of the world.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

There is far too much red tape. Bureaucracy has the potential to stymie good gospel work on the ground. I would want to see decisions made that release clergy from burdensome paperwork so that they can be freed up to get on with the job to which they have been ordained.

The 'Simplification Task Group' makes some helpful suggestions. However, careful check and balances need to be put in place to ensure that power does not become centralized. The needs of the local parish must be borne in mind to any changes that are made.

## **BUILDINGS AND FABRIC**

We're all pondering the future. For a diocese such as Carlisle the issue of buildings is a big headache. In some places closure has to be faced and is the right thing to do. Elsewhere, there is the potential for creative redevelopment in terms of layout and use.

In my present context I've been involved with the closure of church buildings. Equally, I've also overseen the complete re-ordering of another church in the benefice, which has led to the opening of doors into the community and the breathing of new life into the church.

Given my recent experiences I believe I am able to contribute thoughtfully and compassionately to these much needed discussions. I would welcome the opportunity for creative thinking by General Synod to make closure of, or changes to our buildings more straightforward (should this be the wish of the local church family).

## **YOUNG PEOPLE**

Young people are not simply the Church of tomorrow they're the Church of today. I would support wholeheartedly any initiatives in the General Synod that sought to make this a reality in all our parishes.

In my current post we took the brave decision to seek funding for a full-time Children and Families Worker. Amazingly for a small rural benefice, God provided and the blessings that have come have been humbling. Sunday attendance has doubled and there is a vibrancy and enthusiasm amongst the church family to see God work in our church and community. Because of this experience I have a passion to equip and enable others to pioneer new projects aimed at reaching young people with the gospel message.

## **AND FINALLY...**

If elected I would look to keep my feet firmly on the ground and remember the electorate who placed their trust in me to represent the interests of the diocese at Synod. I would want to be accountable to you all, open to hearing your concerns and feeding them in where appropriate, whilst also giving account for how and why I have voted the way I have.