



MARK WALLACE for General Synod 2026

An experienced priest with a passion for clergy wellbeing,
church unity and resourcing leaders.

Please vote for me as your first preference for
General Synod clergy rep for Guildford Diocese.

- Vicar, St Mary of Bethany Woking (Woking Deanery) (2017 onwards)
- Chair, Consultation subgroup of Guildford Vacancy-in-See Committee (current)
- General Synod representative (2024–26)
- Area Dean of Woking (2022–26)
- Trustee, Engage Woking (2022–24)
- Diocese Vocations Advisor (2021–present)
- IME tutor (2021–24)
- Guildford Diocese Advocate for the Living in Love and Faith programme (2021–23)
- Area Dean/Assistant Area Dean of Surrey Heath (2014–17)
- Vicar, All Saints Lightwater (Surrey Heath Deanery) (2012–17)
- Curate of Christ Church Guildford with St Martha-on-the-Hill (Guildford Deanery) (2008–12)

I'd love to hear from you

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I blog at smob.uk/blog

Who am I?

- Brought up in East Finchley, North London.
- Christian since early teens, influenced by a great school CU and faith-filled grandparents.
- Married with two teenage children.
- Worked in book publishing as an editor for eight years (scoring a number-one bestseller with the classic Gareth Gates: Right from the Start!).
- Served in Guildford Diocese for 18 years, in three deaneries.
- A naturally optimistic, 'can-do' personality. Virtually impossible to shock and remarkably hard to offend.

Things I am passionate about

Clergy wellbeing

- Voted to restore clergy pensions to their 2011 level and to introduce a national stipend...
- ...so can we have a CoFE-wide commitment to best practice in clergy housing next?
- Champion of women in ministry and young clergy; fully committed to the Church's Five Guiding Principles on women's ministry.
- We need better support for single clergy, clergy spouses and families.
- Clergy couples, ministers working 'part-time' (there's no such thing!) and those working for no pay are frequently sidelined in CoFE conversations.
- We mustn't be afraid of the personal cost of ministry, but we can carry each other's burdens much more effectively.
- Acknowledge the pressures on clergy marriages; and what it means to be single in ministry.
- The Clergy Wellbeing Covenant is a landmark document, but too many PCC members have never heard of it.
- Many Bishops, Archdeacons and Area Deans offer excellent pastoral care to clergy, but some have a lot to learn. General Synod can promote best practice in pastoral care.
- Clergy need better accountability, mentoring and pastoral supervision.
- A restless interest in mental health; both my parents suffered life-long issues.

Thriving together

- As a two-time Area Dean, I worked with, and advocated for, colleagues from the full range of theological perspectives without fear or favour.
- I have sat with clergy in tears and I have been unafraid to grasp nettles in my own ministry and work with other parishes.
- I bring a determination to cut across our dividing lines, adopting a posture of listening to and building bridges with others, and holding my own views generously.
- Woking Deanery grew less 'pale, male and stale' during my time as Area Dean. I seek to champion those with a less privileged voice in society than my own.
- I voted against the adoption of the Prayers of Love and Faith and support efforts to find a way forward on issues of gender and sexuality which will honour the diversity of opinion and practice in the Church of England. A solution is in view which will enable us all to minister and flourish in the ways we choose. The thing we all agree on is that we would like to stop talking about this issue and move on; this will only happen with a long-term settlement in which no one will get everything they want.

I am happy to support Mark Wallace as a candidate for General Synod. While we may not share all of the same theological understandings, we share a love of church unity and a desire for all to minister from a place of good conscience within the love of Christ and our ecclesiastical structure. I believe Mark is an excellent priest who will be able to represent and serve us all; he understands the differences between shades of church while adamantly refusing to let these define or separate us as a group of loving colleagues and as a diocese of churches. And...I think he will get good things done and done well!

Rev Sandy Clarke, Vicar of The Bourne and Tilford (Farnham Deanery), Seconder

Mark is a priest of deep faith, sound judgement, and considerable pastoral wisdom. Throughout his ministry he has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the Church's mission, combining theological depth with a practical understanding of the challenges facing parishes today. His vast experience of parish ministry and as Area Dean for Woking has given him a realistic appreciation of the opportunities and pressures faced by clergy and congregations alike, ensuring that his contributions are always grounded in the lived experience of the local church. He is both approachable and discerning, willing to ask difficult questions while remaining gracious and respectful of those with whom he disagrees.

Fr Roland Olliff, Vicar of All Saints Woodham (Woking Deanery), Proposer

Leading well in the public square

- I am learning what influence General Synod can have on public debate. Having served here for the last three years, I am keen to continue and deepen my contribution.
- I support fully the Church of England's aim of doubling the number of children and young disciples by 2030. Children are the present of the Church, not the future.
- Climate change is rightly a CofE priority, as our approach to it is the fifth mark of mission. Our bold net zero goal needs to be matched by much greater support for parishes.
- Nurtured a good relationship with our MP and councillors through Woking Borough Council's bankruptcy.
- Warm, praying relationships with Woking's church leaders.

Meet me on this video:

https://youtu.be/H_4FXETtagw

See me speak at General Synod:

https://www.youtube.com/live/DgzkTljWvwI?si=mdOqKmJTpBi48gj_&t=8871