



Revd Dr Andrew Atherstone

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Background and experience

- I have lived and worked in Oxford Diocese for the last 19 years, and for the last decade as associate minister (SSM) of Eynsham and Cassington, two villages in West Oxfordshire in the Woodstock deanery.
- Previously I served in the Reading archdeaconry at St Agnes's and St Paul's, a UPA parish in Reading, as ministry apprentice; and at Christ Church, Abingdon, as stipendiary curate.
- My main employment is training women and men for ordained ministry, and as leaders in theology and mission, at Wycliffe Hall in Oxford, where I teach Christian history and Anglican studies. I am biographer of our archbishop: *Archbishop Justin Welby: Risk-taker and Reconciler* (DLT, 2014).

Priorities for the next General Synod

- I am eager that all General Synod decisions be taken with local parishes in mind, especially to enable us to be more effective in reaching out with the good news of Jesus Christ in our local communities and in the public square. I applaud the new Synod emphasis on mission and evangelism; and on simplification, or reducing ecclesiastical red-tape.
- The next Synod will decide the future shape of theological education. I am eager to promote training which is creative, flexible, theologically rigorous, and of the highest quality in preparing clergy and laity for a lifetime of ministry.
- The next Synod will also make important decisions about marriage and sexuality. On this difficult question I want to help us hear one another, and be heard, while still upholding the teaching of the Bible, and the Anglican canons, on the sanctity of Christian marriage as between a man and a woman for life.
- I am eager to promote the "mutual flourishing" of all parishes across our various traditions (the Five Guiding Principles), not just in theory but in practical reality, as we seek to encourage and bless one another and work together in our common mission.
- In all our debates in the Church of England, I want to see an end to harsh language and political posturing, so that all our conversations are grace-filled and attractive to a watching world. To help this process I have recently co-edited *Good Disagreement? Grace and Truth in a Divided Church* (LionHudson, 2015).

I would appreciate you giving me an early vote.

With thanks,
Andrew Atherstone

Proposer: Canon Andrew Wingfield-Digby (Oxford)
Seconder: Revd Janet Taft (Warfield)