



House of Commons

In the Commons, an MP is chosen by the party in Government to speak officially on behalf of the Church of England. This is the Second Church Estates Commissioner – the incumbent is **Mr Andrew Selous MP**. The Commissioner makes sure that the established Church is accountable to Parliament by answering questions from Members, and guiding church legislation through the House.

The Speaker appoints a Church of England chaplain, whose duties include leading the Commons in prayer every day, and offering pastoral and spiritual care for all who work in the Palace of Westminster. Canon Tricia Hillas will become Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons later this year.

House of Lords

In the House of Lords, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and other senior bishops of the Church of England play a full role in the work of the House. Bishops have sat in Parliament since its inception. As the Lords Spiritual, they are independent members who lead the House in prayer at the start of each sitting day and speak on many issues of concern. Their work is informed not only by their role as Christian leaders, but as people with deep roots in the communities that they serve. Their position reflects the constitution, with the Queen as the Supreme Governor of the established Church of England. The bishops are different from other members of the Lords as their numbers are capped by law at 26 and they have to retire at the age of 70.

Church Laws

Many of the laws passed by the General Synod have also to be approved by both Houses of Parliament before they can come into effect. A special committee of both Houses of Parliament, known as the [Ecclesiastical Committee](#), looks in detail at such proposals before they are passed to MPs and to Peers.

For more information, including recent speeches and questions in Parliament from the bishops and the Church Commissioner, visit the [Church in Parliament](#) website, maintained by the Church of England’s Parliamentary Unit.

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